

Backstreet Boys ★ BabyBird ★ *Evita* beauty

19 Feb 1997 ★ 85p

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Just Seventeen

**'I'D HAVE PETER
ANDRE IN A FIGHT'**

JESSE SPENCER COMIN' ATCHA!

HIGH STREET SUSS
J17'S SHOPPING MASTERCLASS

HE'S JEALOUS OF A POSTER!
WHY LADS HATE YOUR POP STAR PIN-UPS

Step-by-step

**Have BLUR
gone bonkers?
You decide!**

Snogging

Tonsil techniques to make his toes curl!

Gripping true life **'I watched my boyfriend
choke to death'** ★ **'Trapped in a lion's den'**
★ **'Doing a degree... and I'm only 12'**

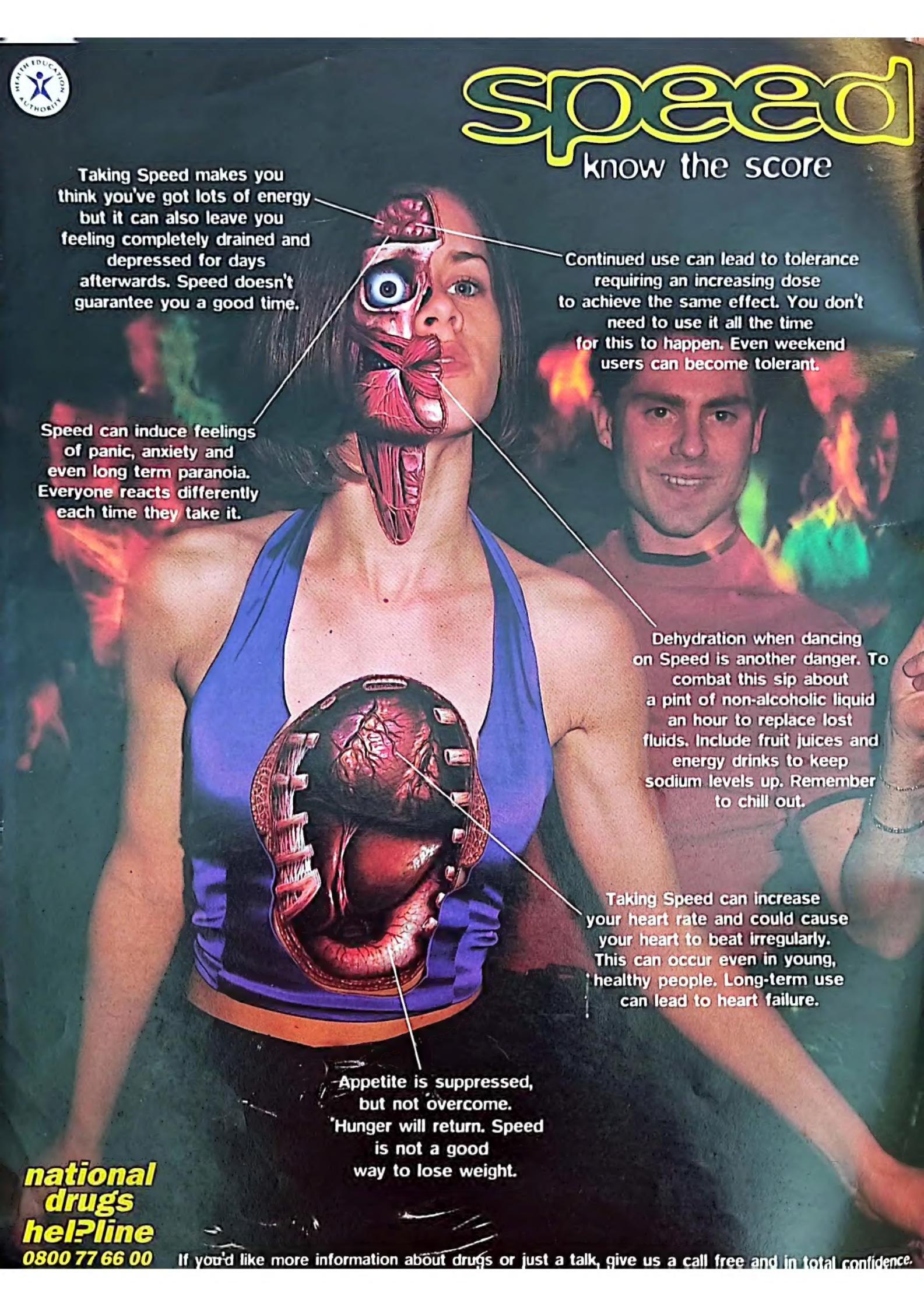


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Truth test Are you a natural born liar?

speed

know the score



Taking Speed makes you think you've got lots of energy but it can also leave you feeling completely drained and depressed for days afterwards. Speed doesn't guarantee you a good time.

Speed can induce feelings of panic, anxiety and even long term paranoia. Everyone reacts differently each time they take it.

Continued use can lead to tolerance requiring an increasing dose to achieve the same effect. You don't need to use it all the time for this to happen. Even weekend users can become tolerant.

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Taking Speed can increase your heart rate and could cause your heart to beat irregularly. This can occur even in young, healthy people. Long-term use can lead to heart failure.

Appetite is suppressed, but not overcome. Hunger will return. Speed is not a good way to lose weight.

Contents

Michael's letter

Hey, homegirl!
Y'know, there's nothing I like better than a good old-fashioned snog. The kinda sesh that goes on for yonks and leaves you with no feeling in your jaw. But even I learn a thing or two from our step-by-step suckface guide on p12. So smear on some industrial-strength lippy, grab a lad and get stuck in.

When you finally come up for air, how 'bout a bit of mall therapy to soothe your chapped lips? On p22 we show you how to get the most from your forays down the high street. And snogable celeb-wise, we're on a bit of a B-tip this week - we've got BabyBird, Blur and the Backstreet Boys. And, er, Jesse Spencer. Doh! See you next Winsday.

Michael X.



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Model: Hannah
Photo: Neil Cooper
Hair and make-up:
Beverly Brook
Pink shirt:
model's own
Red trousers:
Hype DF



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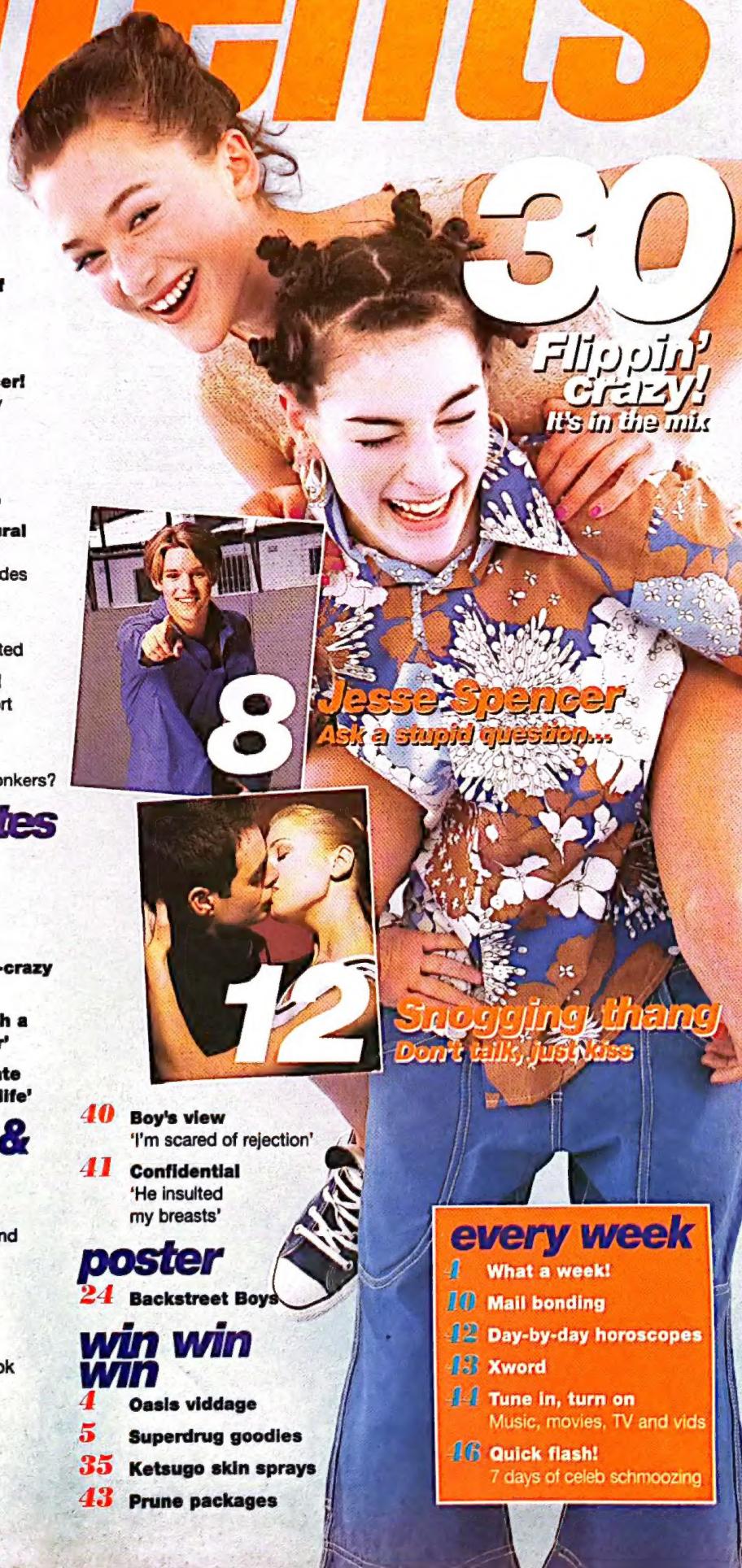
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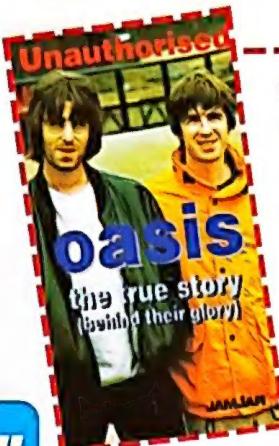
Under a fiver

Get a bad case of the blues with this beaded necklace. It's from Freedom at Top Shop, and it'll set you back a measly £4. Bargain!

Gobsmacked!

"My first boyfriend broke my heart. He left me for a girl who had big breasts, in the sixth grade."

Sandra Bullock on the perils of first love.

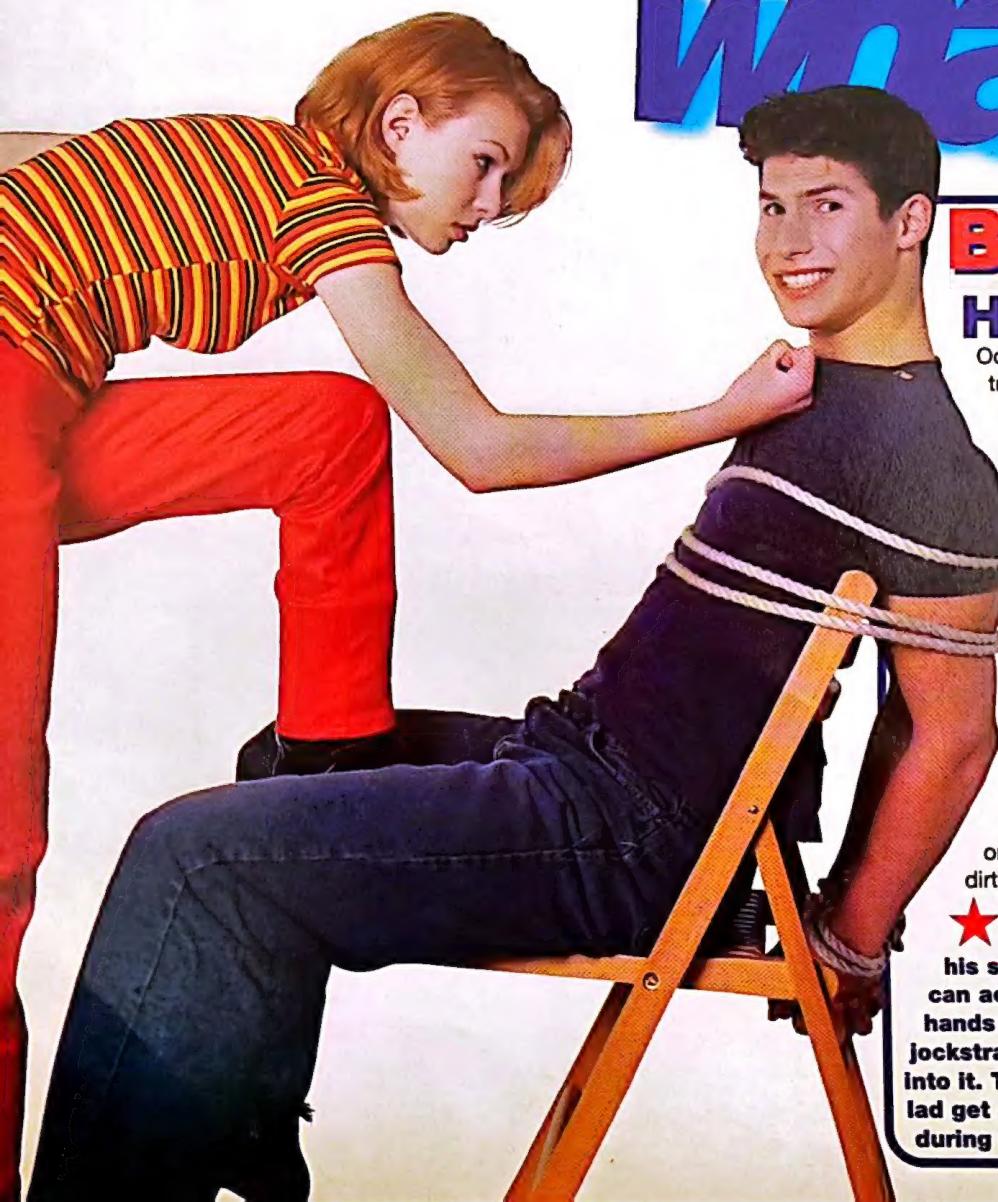


win win win

If you haven't heard much from Oasis lately, don't despair. We've got 40

copies of the video *Unauthorized Oasis - The True Story (Behind Their Glory)* up for grabs (worth £12.99). For a chance to win one, dial 0891 408837 and answer the following 'mad fer it' quezzie: **What's the name of Liam and Noel's older brother?** And remember to leave your full name and address. For comp rules, see page 43.

Hurrah for Ad 'n' Lara as they blow their noses and sniffle...



what a V

Boys aren't us

How was Valentine's Day for you, then? Oodles of cards, a trailerload of chocolate and snogs aplenty from the lads that mattered? Well, lucky old you. But what about those of us whose day was ruined by our so-called boyfriends choosing to ignore us? After careful consideration, we've come up with five ways to get your own back on the low-down, dirty rats:

★ Sprinkle itching powder over his sports kit. If you can actually get your hands on his sweaty jockstrap, shake some into it. Then watch your lad get ants in his pants during footie practice.

★ Tell him he looks just like Liam Gallagher. Then you and your mates can laugh at him doing the Oasis shuffle and shouting 'Mad fer it!' in a Manc accent. Tonight Matthew, he's gonna make an arse of himself.

★ Design a 'Wanted' poster with his mug shot on it, listing the rat's love crimes underneath. Don't forget to offer a reward (of approx 20 pence) for his capture. Then plaster them up all over school and town, and wait for his reaction.

★ Bribe your goriest mate to make eyes at him over her history folder until he slithers over and asks her out on a date. Then she can turn him down scornfully and you can all watch as he slides back to his desk, humiliated.

★ Spread a filthy rumour that all his Valentine cards were from his mum, 'cause she felt sorry for him. He's never had much luck with girls, poor fang.



On the case

While waiting for the sun to come out this summer, you can store your shades in this swanky silver case. It's a snip at £3 from **Miss Selfridge**, and if you've lost last year's sunnies, howzabout treatin' yourself to this tortoiseshell pair? They're £7 and also available from **Miss S.**



If you're a moody girl who changes her lipstick to suit her frame of mind, then get yourself down to **Warehouse**. They've got a cute lip-kit with three different shades of lippy and a pot of gloss to slick over the top. And at £8 it won't leave you down in the mouth.

Wash 'n' go?



Superdrug have just whizzed us over the results of their 'Get Fresh' survey, which digs the dirt on your bathroom habits. Of the girls questioned, only 32 per cent need less than an hour to get ready for a night on the razz. And for 44 per cent of red-faced girls polled, the most embarrassing bathroom experience is to be found sitting on the loo. Now there's a surprise...

Giveaway

Containing everything you need to be squeaky clean, (from zit cream to tea tree oils) get your mitts on one of these five Superdrug Get Fresh - Girls Only packs (worth £10). For a chance to win one, send the answer to the question below on a postcard to: Tea tree/J17, 20 Orange Street, London WC2H 7ED.

Q: Chocolate causes spots - true or false?

You know it makes 'sense'

The Gap have brought out these way-cool ginger-scented incense sticks to complement their range of smellies. A pack of 12 'Om' fragrance sticks costs £4.50. And no, we don't know what 'Om' means either.



Gossip...

with celeb queen Dawn



There won't be any snogathons between *Friends*' Monica and Chandler if **Courteney Cox** can help it. Like most girls, Courts is conscious of her hips and she's had to endure **Matt Perry** teasing her with his waddling penguin impressions. Grow up, boy! ★ Getting on the girl power thang is **Sandra Bullock**. After hearing co-star **Chris O'Donnell** diss laydeez with underarm hair, she and a friend grew theirs just to spite him - go, girls! ★ **Chelsea Clinton** is crushing badly. The Chelster's apparently

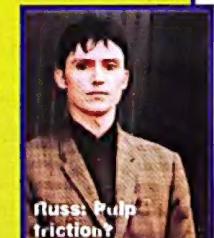
dreaming 'bout crinkly **Kevin Costner**'s "beautiful eyes."

C'mon and smell the salts girl - you're 16 and Kev's a wrinkly 42 ★ Oo-er missus! *X-Files*' **Gillian Anderson**'s admitted she'd love to get steamy with co-star **David Duchovny** - but only for the show's ratings, you understand. Yeah, yeah, we believe ya, Gills! ★ Ex-*Neighbours* babe **Kimberley Davies** has got engaged to

her doctor boyfriend Jason Harvey. Rumours say they'll tie the knot later this year ★ Kula Shaker's **Crispian Mills** has killed the group's buddy image, claiming, "We know we hate each other but we'll keep going." What happened to love 'n' karma? ★ BabyBird's **Stephen Jones** has out-scribbled **Gary Barlow** - he's already written over 400 songs!

Match that, our Gazi! ★ After 13 years as Pulp's guitarist, **Russell Senior** has quit the uncommon people despite pleas from the Jarvster and the other Pulpsters to stay ★ **Spotted:** **Robbie Williams** and **Rick Adams** from *Big Breakfast* filming stints on new show *Ant & Dec Unzipped*,

Jarvis with a girly at a snooty art exhibition, comic **Eddie Izzard** strutting his stuff in Covent Garden wearing a skirt and high-heeled boots, *Live & Kicking*'s **Jamie Theakston** being hounded by popsters **Kenickie** at a party, and **Anna Friel** parking her car a stone's throw from *Teen Towers*!



Russ: Pulp friction?

Word up!

No 43

Stig (noun/adjective)

Origin: From the book *Stig Of The Dump* by Clive King, but the word came to us via the *Hollyoaks* girls.

Definition: You'd call someone a stig if they're looking a tad dorky.

Usage: "Have you seen Damon's new parka? It makes him look a right stig."

Watch 'n' go

Make some time for Argos' new range of watches. Our fave is the cutesy pink one 'cause that's spring's must-have colour.

Get yourself down to Argos and snap one up for £10.49.



SIZZLING!



FIZZING!

Feathers on shire horses

They're the equine version of boot-cut trousers



Diamanté brooches

Raid your gran's jewellery boxes now!

New trainers

So springy they bounce out of the box

Meals with mates

Share your mushroom stroganoff with a friend

Mark and Lard for breakfast

Cooch, they make us feel all warm 'n' tingly

Megaphones

Get your hands on one and shout it loud!

Chunky oatmeal jumpers

Get into tank tops instead

Messy bedrooms

Oh Muum, do we have to tidy them?

Anthea Turner

Get rid of that woman, now!

Sales reps

You can take your dodgy patter and you can sell it down the river

Chewing gum

It's fine between your teeth, but on the soles of your boots? No ta.

Rude boys

Lads who ask you where your 'Off' switch is. Begone, wussies!

"What a week!" was written to the sounds of Beth Orton's *Trailer Park*, the *ER* theme tune, Björk's *Telegram*, Jungle Brothers' *Done By The Forces Of Nature* and Ant & Dec's *Shout*.

He's jealous of a poster!

Does your geezer go into a green rage when you ogle spunky celebs? J17 meets three lads whose girlfriends have stars in their eyes...

Mark of respect

For **Damian Manhertz** and **Laurelle Scales**, both 16 from Leicester, swing king Mark Morrison is the source of their dilemma.

Damian "My girlfriend's obsessed with Mark Morrison. We've been together over a year and she's getting worse. Laurelle's room's covered in posters of him and she's always playing his music – it's like being brainwashed.

I used to live next door to Mark and I thought he was OK then – apart from his blaring music! But now I hate him 'cause he's rammed down my throat all the time. I'm constantly having to talk about the times I saw him and she asks me the same questions over and over.

Laurelle doesn't realise it makes me feel threatened to be compared with Mark. I feel I'm second fiddle when she's on about him all the time. I haven't got his money, but I'm a better catch! Besides, if I blagged about all the beauties I've been out with, she'd go mad!"



I love Laurelle, but I'm looking forward to her growing out of him – or his career nosediving. That'd sort it!"

Laurelle "Damian is so jealous, it's crazy. If I mention anything about Mark, he gets in a strop. It's not like I'm going to run off with him, so I don't know what Damian's problem is. I can't even listen to his music without being moaned at. Damian reckons he isn't jealous, just sick of hearing about him. But it's because Mark is so talented that Damian gets stroppy.

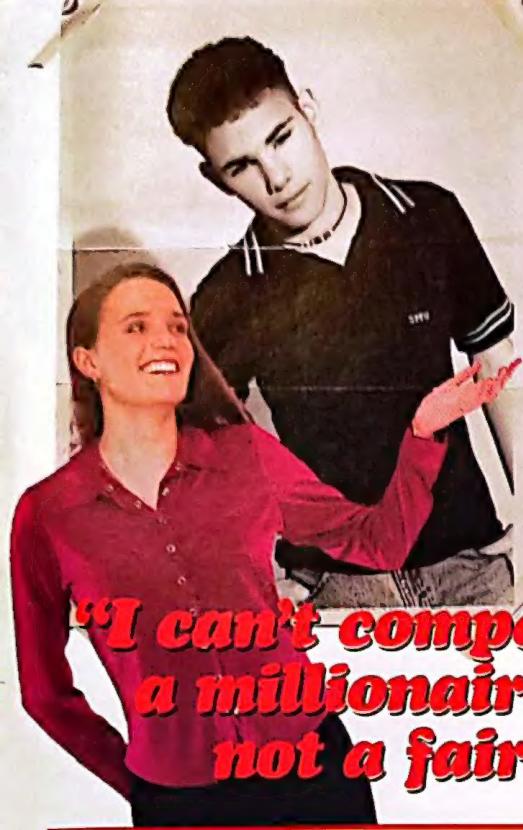
I'd do anything for a date with Mark. I'd try to persuade Damian that if he let me go out with Mark once, I'd get him out of my system!

"Laurelle's always playing his music – it's like being brainwashed!"

I wouldn't dump Damian – I want to have my cake and eat it. Mark whenever I wanted and Damian on the side would be perfect!

I know Mark's meant to be a bad boy but I think it's exaggerated. He looks like he could protect you from anything, but is cuddly with it. Damian's cool too, and he's got a cute bum. But not much money!"

Albar-ney



Vincent Johnson and Kathryn Turner, both 17 from Middlesex, have Beetiebum Damon Albarn to deal with.

Vincent "I hate Blur's music and Damon Albarn's nothing special. I try to get Kathryn to listen to a bit of swing and hip hop, but she thinks she's being unfaithful if she

doesn't listen to Blur 24 hours a day! I'm not blowing my own trumpet, but I reckon I'm better than Damon, just not as cocky.

It sounds stupid to be jealous of a pop star, but I feel like my girlfriend is actually going out with the bloke sometimes. I try not to moan about Kathryn's obsession because that just puts me in a bad light. Instead I tell her I really fancy Louise and then she gets the hint and behaves herself – for about ten minutes.

If Damon comes on TV or the radio, she jumps on the phone to her mate. She turns into a complete maniac. I might as well not exist.



I can't compete with a millionaire, so it's not a fair match. It doesn't make you feel very special, knowing she'd run off with a stranger just 'cause he writes songs – and crap ones at that."

Kathryn "I think it's funny how Vince gets insecure when I mention Damon. Sometimes I call Vince Damon and pretend it's by mistake – he goes mad. If he's jealous, then it must mean he thinks I've got a reasonable chance of getting it on with Damon, but it's so obvious that Damon only exists on my wall.

But if I did ever get the chance, I have to admit I'd leave Vince for Damon! I know it's cruel, but how could you live with yourself if you'd turned down the sexiest man alive? I'm sure he'd do the same if it was Pamela Anderson. And I'd go back to him after and tell him all about it.

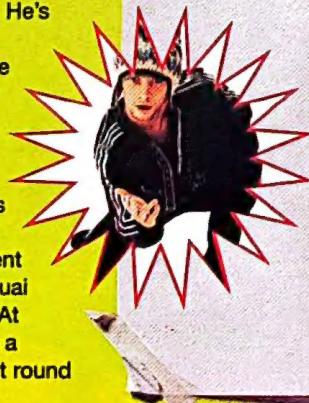
Vince says I'm obsessed with Blur, but I'm no worse than lots of my mates.

Hey, I like having two different men in my life!"

Jamiroq-why?

For Thomas Danquah and Laura Myatt, both 17 from Hertfordshire, it's virtual insanity when they squabble over Jay Kaye.

Thomas "I don't know why Laura fancies Jay Kaye. He's rough, scruffy and a complete show off. He looks like he needs a good bath and a shave. I reckon he only wears that stupid hat because he's got a secret bald patch!"



Laura's whole life is spent either listening to Jamiroquai or dribbling over Jay Kaye. At times I think she'd rather rip a poster off her wall and carry it round instead of going out with me.

I wouldn't call it jealousy, I'd just say I don't always feel as important as some far-away pop star she's never going to meet. She should live in the real world and remember I'm her boyfriend – not some scruffy git in a hat who doesn't know she exists.

Our only arguments are about music – I tell her Jamiroquai isn't the only music on the planet. I reckon it's just a phase anyway. I mean, where are all the Take That fans now?"

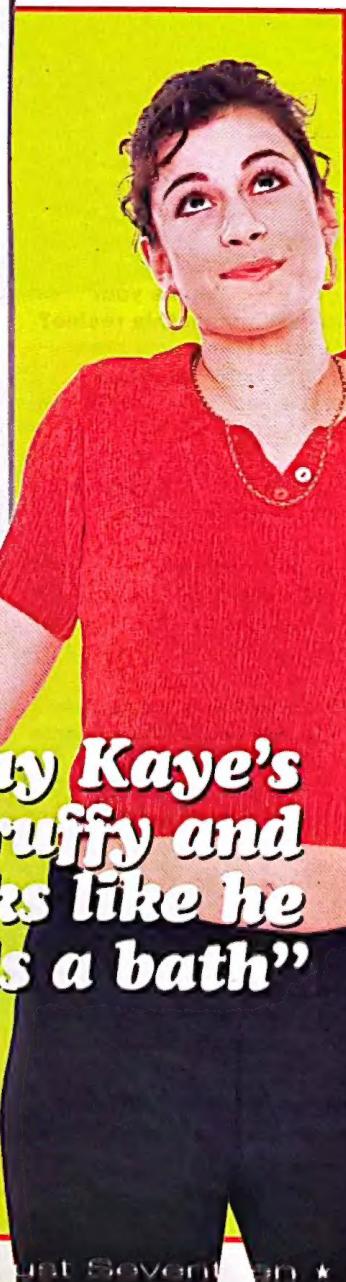
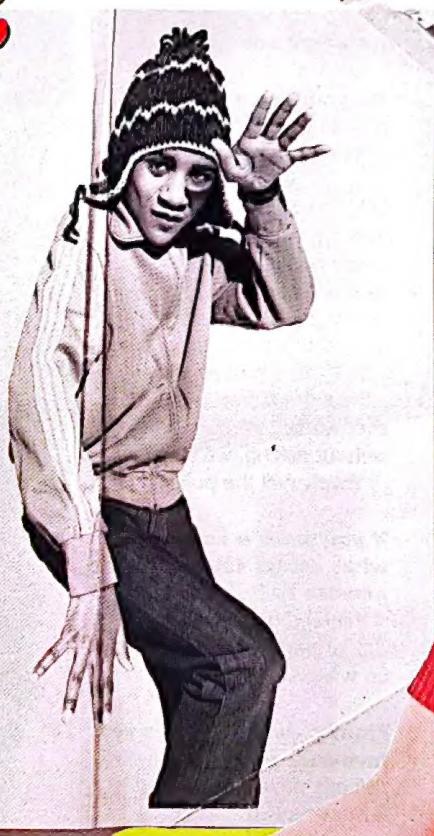
Laura "There's nothing I don't like about Jay Kaye. He's got a brilliant voice, he's gorgeous and he's a top dancer. I love his cheeky face and I think he's really individual. I'd be his cosmic girl any day!

I can't help dancing around my room if I'm

playing Jamiroquai. My mates fancy clean and boring people like Boyzone, but Jay Kaye's got real style.

I love Tom, but if the choice had to be made, it'd be me and Jay Kaye off to Paris in his purple Ferrari. I'd make him sing the whole way! My dream is to copy the Polaroid ad. Go to a gig and chuck a photo of me on stage with my phone number!

Thomas goes mad when I talk about Jay Kaye, but I do it more to wind him up! If he ranted on about a girl he fancied, I suppose I'd get annoyed. But I can't help it!"

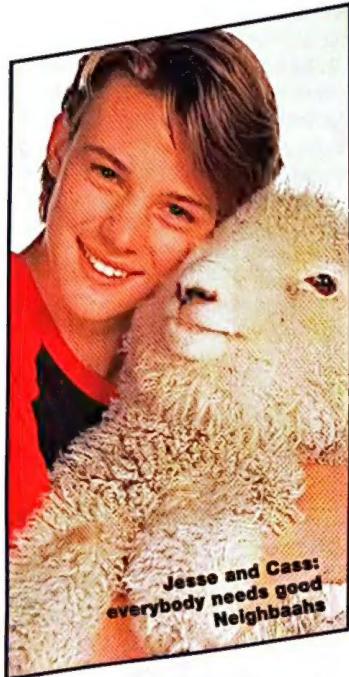


"Jay Kaye's scruffy and looks like he needs a bath"

If you were a Gladiator what would your name be?
"I'd be Tigersnake and I'd be good at the battle of wits."

Who in the pop world could you have in a fight?
"Peter Andre – I reckon I'd beat him in a battle."

Do blonds have more fun?
"I wouldn't know, 'cause I'm more fair than blond."



What's your favourite smoothie recipe?
"Get one blender and shove in some vanilla ice cream, a banana and some long-life milk for extra froth. Mmm!"

Are you just a big Jessie?
"No, I'm not! The cheek!"

Are you embarrassed about public displays of burping?
"I burp in public. I fart in public too and I don't think I'm the only one."

Who'd win in a scrap, Lou Carpenter or Alf from Home And Away?
"Alf. I'm not"

being disloyal to *Neighbours*, but I think he's far more aggressive than our Lou."

What's the most revolting part of your bod?
"My feet because they stink, and my hair because I don't wash it very often. I'm pretty hopeless at personal hygiene."

Does Casserole the lamb have any anti-social habits?
"He just doesn't stop! He's a funny little thing is Casserole. He leaves little messages all around the set."

If you were in a Britpop band, what would they be called?
"The Peanut Butter Jar."

What's your fave English soap and which one would you most like to be in?
"It's not really a soap, but I loved *Absolutely Fabulous* because it was so funny."

Do you kiss on a first date?
"I try not to."

What are your real-life neighbours like? Do they ever walk into your house uninvited?
"We don't know them very well, although we do get on with the old guy who lives across the street. But if they ever walked into our house without asking, we'd probably call the police!"

If you were a superhero, what would your special powers be?
"I think I'd have to be Spiderman so I could climb up walls and spin webs."

Finally, Jesse, what's yer favourite joke?
"What's brown and sticky? A brown stick!"



HEY BIG

"I RECKON
I COULD
HAVE THAT
PETER ANDRE
IN A
FIGHT!"

BEST OF BRITISH?

Because juicy Jesse's currently holidaying in Blighty, *J17* devised a Brit-culture quiz to see if he's been paying attention...

1 What footie team does Alan Shearer play for?

"Um, England?"

Half a point for Jesse's wild guess. For a full point, Jesse should've said Newcastle United.

2 What's the name of Oasis' rhythm guitarist, the one who isn't a Gallagher brother?

"Er, Noel? Pass."

Wrong! Bonehead would have earned Jesse another point.

3 Which English soap is set in Manchester?

"*EastEnders*."

Duh! No, it's *Corrie*.

4 Alright, can you hum the theme tune to *EastEnders*?

"Dedededede-der-der, dededede dededede-de-der-der..."
Er, thanks Jesse. That's cor-rect!

5 Which British fashion designer invented the bumster trouser?

"Me."

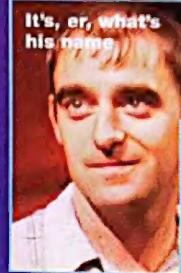
Nope, it was cheeky chirpy cockney Alexander McQueen.



6 Name all the Spice Girls.

"I only know Victoria, 'cause I fancy her."

Obviously girl power hasn't reached Oz yet, so we'll give Jesse another half point.



7 And their nicknames?

"Sorry, pass."

It seems Posh Spice, Ginger Spice, Scary Spice, Sporty Spice and Baby Spice aren't as well known as they thought they were.

8 Who's third in line to the British throne?

"I haven't got a clue."
It's Prince Harry.

9 Who's Tim Henman?

"Oh, I know this. He's that tennis guy who won the ATP Sydney tournament."
Hurrah! Another point for Jesse.

10 What disgusting thing is black pudding made out of?



EastEnders

Soap in yer eyes

Soot? Liver?

Wrong! The answer you're looking for is pig's blood. Charming, eh?

Verdict: A paltry
3/10. Pah!

SPENCER!

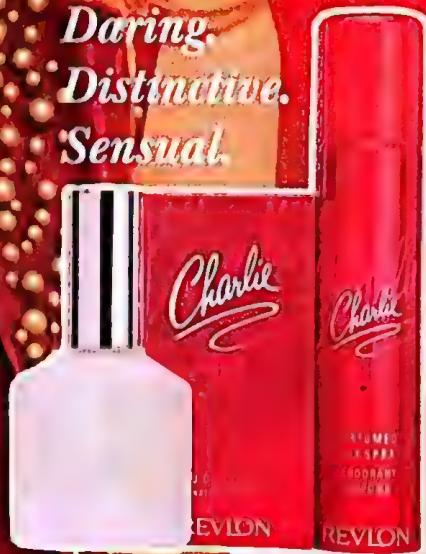
STRENGTH! IT'S JESSE SPENCER, AKA RAMSEY STREET ROMEO BILLY. BUT IS THE SOAP DISH AS WEIRD AS HE'S WONDERFUL? *J17* ASKED HIM SOME KER-AZEE QUESTIONS...

Charlie

CLAUDIA
CAN BE
WHOEVER
SHE WANTS
WITH

Charlie
RED

*Daring.
Distinctive.
Sensual.*



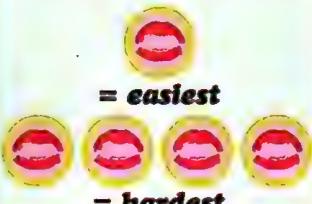
REVOL



Welcome to Snogsville

A kiss can say a million things. So if you wanna get fluent in the language of lip action, get reading J17's ultimate step-by-step guide...

Difficulty ratings



First frenchie

Which means? Tentative tongue-twisting for beginners. **How it's done** Tilt your head to one side (to avoid nose-bashing), then go straight for the mouth. Once your lips lock you'll know exactamundo what to do! Wrap your hands around his waist or shoulders, but don't swirl your tongue round like you're fishing for the teabag in a cuppa. It just ain't sexy.



Good points You're no longer a snog virgin and things will only get better from now on.

Bad points If it's hardly mindblowing, don't fret. You'll both just have to practise. It's a hard life!

Difficulty rating It can be nerve-janglin', but once you've started, nothing'll stop you!



Ever so polite socialite

Which means? More commonly known as an air kiss, think Patsy and Edina from *Ab Fab*. It's as fake as a warehouse full of fun fur, but is the done thing at swanky dos.

How it's done Having screeched 'Dahling!' in a high-pitched voice, aim in the direction of the lad's ear then kiss the air, making a 'mmwah' sound. Your mouth shouldn't make contact with his cheek at all. The rule of this kiss is: the less skin-on-skin contact, the better. When you say your goodbyes, repeat the procedure, adding, 'We must do lunch sometime.' Even if you mean sometime in the next millennium.

Good points Once you've mastered it, you can mix in the highest social circles. And try air kissing on both sides for extra continental class.

Bad points You could get yourself a rep as a shallow, insincere schweenie.

Difficulty rating Let's face it, even the most brainless bimbos can get this one right.



Don't wanna be with ya

Which means? When it comes to chemistry between you and your man, the lab technician left the building ages ago. It's time to say goodbye, but you wanna stay mates.

How it's done Steer well clear of the lips (so you don't send him the wrong signals) and kiss his cheek. Follow up with a cosy, bear hug which shows you still like him but are *not* going to shog him. If you squeeze him tight enough, he'll only be able to nod his head in agreement.

Good points If you want to stay on good terms with your ex, this is the perfect 'no hard feelings, honey' way to end it.

Bad points Breakin' up can be hard to do, and if he ain't happy with the split it could backfire. You could be left being pushed away, kissless as well as buddyless. Ulp!

Difficulty rating Making sure your about-to-be ex doesn't think you're gonna snog him is difficult.





Hollywood hot lips

Which means? This is passion, movie-style. Think Keanu 'n' Sandra in *Speed*. Think Liv Tyler and Tom Everett Scott in *That Thing You Do*. Think Grant Mitchell and Joe's wiggy mum (*er, are you sure? – Ed*).

How it's done Give your lad a smouldering glance then take a surreptitious deep breath (*à la* underwater swimming) and lunge towards him. Your lips lock, and before you know it you're playing tonsil tennis as if your life depends on it.

Don't forget about your arms: they should be roaming over his back and tickling his neck.

Good points This is the aerobics work-out of kissing and it's a dream way to burn calories.

Bad points You'll need the St John Ambulance on standby, 'cause you could end up with cut or bruised lips and severe tongue strain.

Difficulty rating If you can pat your head and stroke your stomach simultaneously, you're not gonna have any probs with this manoeuvre.



Which means? It's the end of your first date, and you either want to get rid of him or make sure there'll be a follow-up.

How it's done

If he's history, blow him a kiss from the doorstep. If not, kiss his cheek close to his mouth. If he's keen, work your way to his mouth

and do what comes naturally. But don't cling on too long or he may think you're a tad over-enthusiastic.

Good points It's a surefire way to find out how much he's into you.

Bad points Your oldsters may be twitching the curtains, and some lads think walking a girl home is an invitation for a snog. But, girlfriend, if your heart ain't in it, don't do it.

Difficulty rating Choosing the right moment to lunge can be tricky. Other than that, it's a cinch.



'Slow 'n' sexy'

Which means? Telling someone you love them without exercising your vocal chords.

How it's done This is for all you lurvers in the house. Place a hand either side of your partner's face and pull him slowly towards you, gazing deep into his eyes. Then nibble his lips gently and cover his kisser with



slow, sensual smackers. Meanwhile run your fingers through his hair. For an extra-special touch kiss his cheek, leave your lips in place and gently breathe in through your nose. He'll feel a more intense sensation without realising how you did it. Magic!

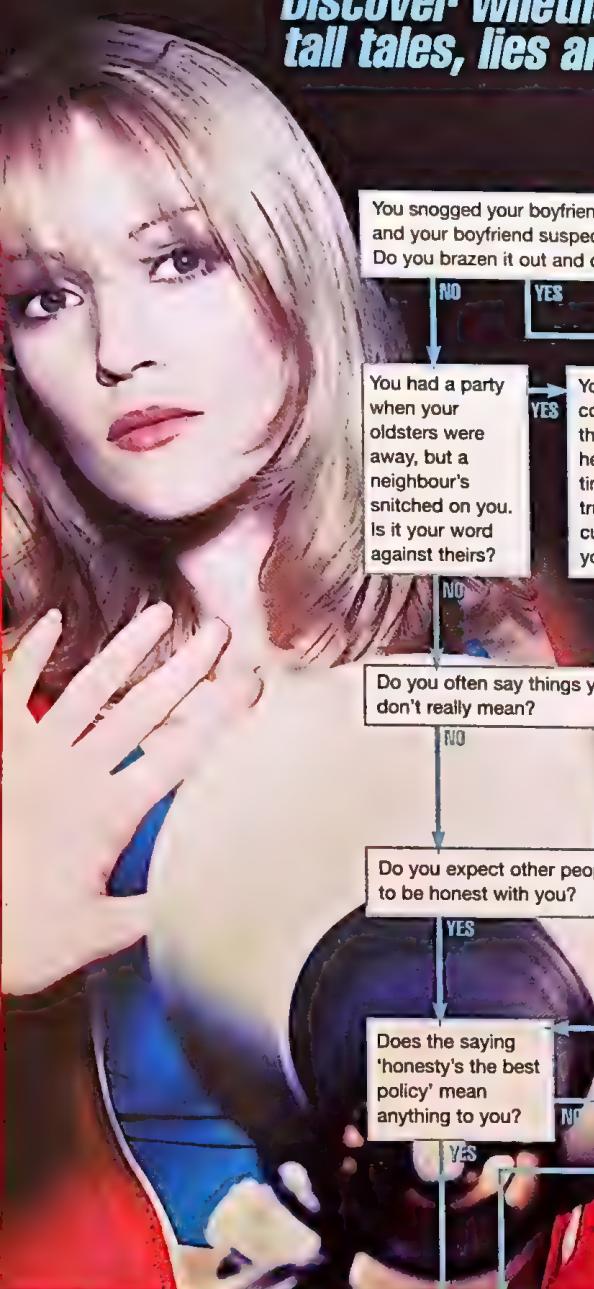
Good points One of the best, it'll have you floating around for days.

Bad points Absolutely none, 'cept you may get addicted to smogging!

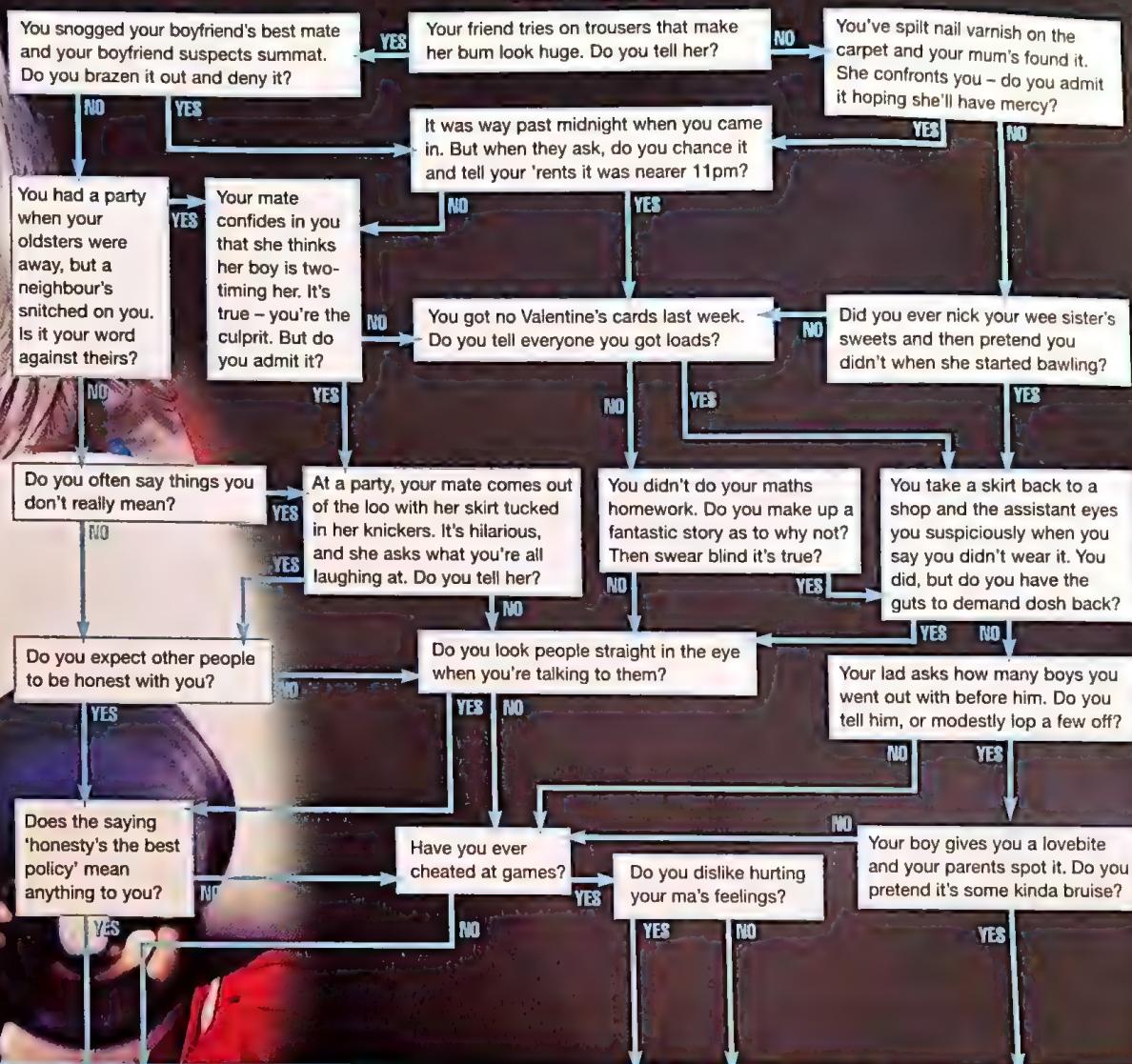
Difficulty rating Once you've found a deserving boy, it's just pure heaven.



Are you a natural born liar?



Start here



Truthsayer

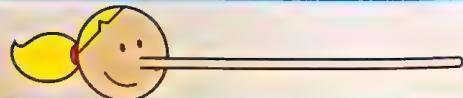
Lie? You don't know the meaning of the word. You're way too wholesome for your own good. If someone asks you a question, your face gives the game away. You're physically incapable of fibbin'. Sure, honesty's the best policy, but a little white lie wouldn't hurt now and then. Especially if it'd make someone feel better. Remember the saying – if you can't say anything good, don't say anything at all!

White queen

You're a strategic liar, but that doesn't mean you don't have a conscience. In fact, you're choosy about the lies you tell. Porkies are reserved to spare someone else's feelings or to save you from trouble. But when the sitch calls for the truth, you're quite prepared to put your neck on the line. Even if that means getting into trouble. And white lies to protect your friends, well, they aren't really lies, are they?

Paris on fire

Who me, sir? Yes you, miss. Whatever trouble you're in, you always take the 'it wasn't me' line. If there's a way to get out of something you'll find it, even if it means blaming a mate. You're happy telling your lad and your parents big porkie pies. After all, what they don't know won't harm them. But before long your lies'll catch up with you and then no-one'll believe anything you say, even if it's true.



Be aware of what you wear

ACCORDING TO A RECENT GOVERNMENT REPORT* YOU COULD BE IN SERIOUS DANGER AT THIS VERY MOMENT... FROM YOUR CLOTHES. CLOTHING FIRES CAN CAUSE SEVERE BURNS AND EVEN DEATH, SO IF YOU WANT TO MAKE SURE YOU DON'T END UP A VICTIM, READ ON...

OK. It's a typical night out. You've used an entire can of mousse to make sure your hair stays up, you've plucked your eyebrows until there are only a few hairs left and you're wearing the outfit you spent the whole of Saturday scouring the shops for. But, if you're not careful, your clothes could become a death trap.

ALL clothes can catch alight

Clothes crisis

Most people don't realise it but ALL clothes can catch alight. It doesn't matter whether you're wearing a soft, floaty summer dress or a tough, tailored jacket – if you don't take care, you could set them on fire.

Flame danger

The obvious things to steer clear of are ovens and open fires. All it takes is a single spark to contact your clothes and you could be in trouble. One 13-year-old girl was standing with her back against the cooker while she watched her mum prepare tea. Without any warning a flame from the oven set her clothes alight. Luckily, she lived to tell the tale, but both her hands were severely burned when she tried to put the flames out.

Bums

Cigarette lighters and matches aren't any safer either. And although candles and incense sticks may look and smell lovely,

they should always be treated with extreme caution. When you light a candle, make sure you place it well away from anything that could catch alight. Remember, it only takes a second for a piece of clothing to be set on fire. A 12-year-old girl brushed past a candle and accidentally set her T-shirt on fire. Her chest is now covered with scars from the burns she suffered.

Baggies beware

Right. Now you know about the dangers, what can you do to make sure you don't end up a victim? Always be extremely careful whenever you're around ovens, matches, barbecues, candles or anything that produces heat or a flame. Beware if you're wearing anything baggy. If a flowing skirt or a big sleeve accidentally brushes against a flame, you might not notice it until it's too late.

Labels for life

Have a look at the labels on your clothes and no, we don't mean the designer kind. If your new top says 'KEEP AWAY FROM FIRE' it means it. The way you wash your clothes can be vital too. If the garment is flame retardant follow the washing instructions on the label.

Sorted

Remember, one careless move and you could be in trouble. And, let's face it, clothes are cool but it ain't worth risking your life over 'em.

* Figures taken from DTI Home Accident Surveillance System and associated DTI consumer safety reports.

THE FACTS

- Clothing fires kill over 10 per cent of their victims.
- A worrying large number of girls under the age of 18 suffer serious injury in clothing fires.
- Naked flames eg. gas cookers, fires, matches, candles and cigarette lighters cause most accidents where clothes are set alight.
- It's not just floaty nightdresses that get set alight. Most clothing fires involve your average daywear.

IN AN EMERGENCY...

- If you haven't already seen Clare Buckfield from 2.4 Children on TV warning about the dangers of clothing fires, this is what you should do if you ever have to deal with a clothes fire yourself:

STOP Don't panic and run about. It'll only make the fire worse.

WRAP the victim in a coat, rug or blanket.

DROP to the floor and...

ROLL until all the flames are extinguished.

● As soon as the flames are out, pour cold water over the burn for AT LEAST ten minutes. Do not remove any of the victim's clothing (unless it is a tight belt or a piece of jewellery, as burns tend to swell and tight clothing could cause more discomfort).

● Cover the burned area with a clean, smooth cloth or cling-film to keep out infection until it can be properly dressed.

● Dial 999 or take the injured person to hospital.

● Do not give them anything to eat or drink in case they need to have a general anaesthetic.



Produced in the interests of your safety by DTI Consumer Safety Unit.

6-page
Reality bites

Reality bites ★ Reality bites ★ Reality

Over the next 6 pages, we bring you 5 amazing true experiences



Just Seventeen
Tons of toe-curling confessions
every week

Trap or lions

A safari trip left **Clair Saunders** and boyfriend **Craig Gordon**, both 19, (right) with a deadly decision – get **burnt alive in a blazing car** or **mauled by savage lions...**

"I'd been going out with Craig for two months when we decided to have some days out together. We'd heard Longleat Safari Park in Wiltshire was a cool day out, so we decided to pay it a visit. It was a lovely spring day last May and I thought it would be perfect because it wasn't too hot – we wouldn't be able to open the windows in the lion and tiger enclosures.

We had a lovely drive from our hometown Southampton up to the zoo and when we arrived, we decided to drive round the safari park. I really wanted to go on the boat to see the gorillas, but as it turned out we didn't get that far.

Monkey business

We drove into the monkey pen and parked the car. A monkey jumped on the roof and then clambered down the back before biting the spoiler. Then he tore off the windscreen washer jet, before running away and giving it to his mate.

I was laughing 'cause it was so funny, but Craig was a bit worried about his car as it was his pride and joy – a Peugeot 205 GTi. Looking back now, I wish that was all that had gone wrong with it that day!

The next enclosure was home to the lions. We drove in and Craig turned the engine off. We counted 12 of them. It

was amazing to see them so close. They were beautiful, but pretty scary. Some of them were funny though, and we were laughing at a male and female who were lying upside down on the ground.

Getting warmer...

We'd been watching them for a while when Craig said, 'Let's go and see the gorillas.' He went to start the car but nothing happened. He tutted and turned the ignition key again, but it just made a strange noise and juddered. He said, 'This time it'll start,' and tried a third time. All of a sudden we could smell burning coming through the vents, followed by thick, black smoke pouring from the bonnet.

I started blasting on the car horn to get some help, while Craig glanced around to see how close the lions were. I shouted, 'Do something!' and then, in a flash

"It was like a scene out of Jurassic Park"



Wed in a hair

DAY OF TERROR

of inspiration, Craig yelled, 'Remember the safety leaflet we were given at the park entrance. It's got the rangers' phone number on it. Use your mobile!'

My hands were shaking so much I could hardly dial the number. It wasn't easy with lions slowly circling the car – but I got through and begged the rangers to come and get us. We were worried about the fire spreading, but we were also faced with the lions. Some were only about 15 feet away and were watching us intently.

It was like *Jurassic Park*, where the heroes get trapped in their cars by man-eating dinosaurs. Craig was trying to stay calm, but I could see the fear in his eyes.

Trapped in terror

I just kept thinking, 'Oh my God, we're going up with this car,' 'cause we knew it could blow up at any minute. It was horrible. I wanted to jump out and run, but I was scared we'd be mauled to death. As the smoke worsened, Craig reached for one of the door handles, but froze when he saw the big cats prowling nearby.

Just as we were giving up hope, we saw some rangers whizzing towards us in two jeeps. They shouted at us to stay put while one jeep blocked off the lions so they couldn't see us. Then they scared off as many as they could. It felt totally



The mane attraction: Clair and Craig

surreal being in such trouble.

Then the wardens told us to get out and run to the other jeep which was parked nearby. I was freaking out because by then I'd clambered into the back of the car and couldn't get out because the seat had got stuck. Craig yelled, 'Hurry Clair, jump into the front and I'll get you out!' I yanked on the seat lever to move it forward but it wouldn't budge. I'll never

jeep. As I ran I was so relieved to be away from the fire I didn't even think about the prowling lions.

It was only when we got into the jeep and Craig put his arms around me that I started to cry. Suddenly we realised how close we'd come to death. The rangers took us indoors and made us some tea while the fire brigade towed the car away and put out the flames.

Out of danger

It was so unlucky the car caught fire when it did. Craig never had any trouble with the car before then. He's had it looked at by a mechanic since, who said a small engine jam caused the fire.

Four days after the accident we plucked up the courage to go back to the park to



The Longleat lions: this time it's roar

forget the terror of thinking I was going to be burnt alive. Craig was shouting at me to squeeze out, while frantically checking over his shoulder for the lions. After what felt like forever, I somehow managed to haul my way through the gap between the seats. We both sprang out together and dashed to the safety of the waiting

"I wanted to jump out and run but I was scared we'd be mauled to death"

thank all the staff for saving our lives. Besides, I still wanted to see the gorillas! Mind you, we got a lift in the park's minibus. I didn't fancy another close-up of the lions."

● **Craig:** "When we were trapped in our car it was like time standing still. I knew we couldn't wait much longer to get out, but it was like jumping from the frying pan and into the fire! It was an amazing experience, though, and not one we'll ever forget. The staff at Longleat were fantastic. Not only did they save our lives but they gave us free tickets to go back to the park."

● **Wiltshire fireman Steve Williams:** "Some of the lions were driven away by the wardens, but one in particular seemed more interested in having a cooked lunch! It was not safe in the enclosure with him around, so we towed the car away before we put out the fire."

● **Ian Turner, assistant chief game warden:** "Eleven of our lions, including one big male called Penfold, were rounded up. But Simba, a two-year-old male, refused. So we had to make sure he didn't make a break for Clair and Craig."

● Longleat Safari Park is home to 36 species, including rhinos, elephants, zebras and tigers. For more info on prices and its other attractions, call 01985 844 400.

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"We're nifty Fi

FOGEY FAN FEST

"Oasis? 3T? Spice Girls? Hell no. We'd rather tune into '50s musical heroes. And we reckon our '50s-style group – the Rock-A-Beats – is the youngest pop band in the world.

I'm 15, my younger brother Ray is 13, and our little brother Neil is only 8. We used to listen to modern music like MC Hammer and Bon Jovi, but we always loved living to our parents' '50s discs too. There's something about the music of that era that really eats into your soul.

The first record I practised drumming to, four years ago, was Bill Haley And The Comets' classic *Rock Around The Clock* and since then I've not really bothered with any modern sounds. And my brothers soon got into it too.

I play drums and sing, and my nickname's 'Slim Jim' – 'cause it's got that '50s ring to it! 'Sugar' Ray

took up the double bass and 'Little Red' Neil started learning guitar.

Last September we performed our first gig, busking in Leeds. Our show drew a huge crowd and we raised £220 for charity in 20 minutes.

Soon after, we performed at a holiday centre in Great Yarmouth.

Then we appeared on local TV too and cut a track for a compilation CD. Now we've even been asked to record our very own album.

Greased lightning

The atmosphere at our gigs is usually electric, with everyone rocking away, old and young. We perform in jeans with big '50s turn-ups, special stage shirts, and greased-up, slicked-back

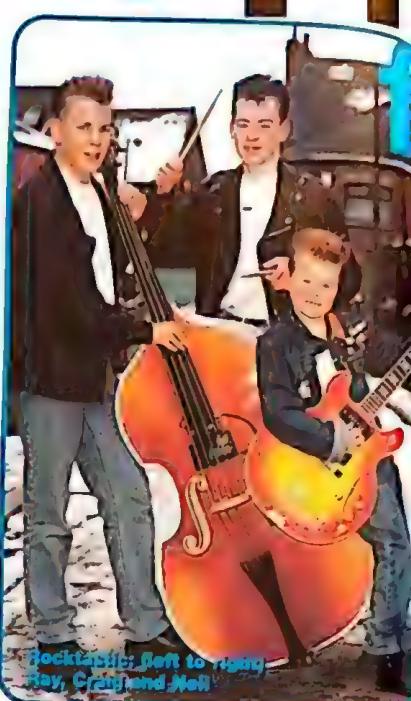
hair and huge quiffs. At first we expected heckles like, 'Here comes Elvis!', but everyone thinks it's great – even our school mates.

We may seem unhip, but we actually attract girl groupies. In fact

most rock 'n' roll fans are in their mid-teens. The girls all dress up in flouncy, bright dresses just like in the movie Grease.

Unfortunately, Mum and Dad are always waiting in the wings so we can't misbehave! If anything, Neil has the most fans! He's developed a cute little look which melts people's hearts.

The only trouble is, there are always stalls selling '50s memorabilia at the gigs, and we end up blowing our takings on old clothes, posters and books. Our



Rocktastic! Left to right: Ray, Craig and Neil

bedrooms have become total shrines to our idols.

Best of all though, we've been

"I'm a Keegan crazy to

Victoria Rickaby, 16, (right) has a footie idol. But he's no young buck. He's a grey-haired manager three times her age...

"Being a Geordie lass, one of the best days of my life was when Kevin

Keegan became manager of Newcastle United Football Club – or the 'Toon' as we call them. The whole city was ecstatic. Kevin's the greatest man in football and everyone in Newcastle knew he was the one to put United back on the map. Now he's gone, everyone's in shock.

We were heading for relegation to the Third Division when he took over, but he pulled us through and got us into the

Premier League. Then he bought Alan Shearer, the best player in the land. Everyone here loves Kevin. He's bigger than royalty, bigger than God. In fact, he is God.

Geordies have named their dogs,

even their children, after him. Loads of girls round here are called Keegan, and some boys have

Kevin as their first name and Keegan as their second. I'm proud to be a Kev fan, even though he may seem an unlikely idol for a girl my age.

Kevin-scent

When teachers or parents told kids off they'd always say, 'Don't do that, Kevin wouldn't like it.' Everyone looked up to him – even rival Sunderland fans admire Kevin.

I'd heard rumours that Kevin was thinking of resigning, but when it was announced on 8 January I couldn't believe it. I kept telling myself, 'No they're kidding.' When I realised the story was true, I ran straight downstairs crying, 'Mum, Mum,



Foot on the Tyne! Victoria mourns at the gates of St James' Park

Kevin's left! I skipped lessons at college and rushed to St James' Park, the Toon's home ground. It was about 11am, but about 300 fans were already there. There was such an atmosphere, it felt as if someone had died.

There weren't just girls in tears, men were crying too. Some fans had banners saying, 'We love you Kevin.' A couple of the players arriving for training looked just

"He's bigger than God."

In fact, he is God!"

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invited to play a gig in London with Bill Haley's legendary Comets band. It's a dream come true! Bill's dead, but the five surviving Comets heard us on the radio and wanted to get it together with us.

The Comets are pretty old now – in fact, their ages total 340 years – so fans will see possibly the oldest and the youngest rock 'n' rollers in the world, on stage together! It'll be nerve-racking playing alongside our idols, but we just can't wait."

- 'Sugar' Ray reckons, "To play with The Comets is out of this world."
- 'Little Red' Neil says, "I used to play on computer games all day, but this is much more fun!"
- Comets' drummer Dick Richards, 72, adds, "We can show these youngsters a thing or two about rocking, once we've built up a head of steam!"

Y loony on'

as stunned and upset as we were. Everyone hoped Kevin would be there so they could persuade him to stay. When leaflets were handed out saying he'd left because he thought he'd taken the club as far as he could, we had to accept he wasn't coming back. I don't think a single Newcastle fan slept that night.

Toon gloom

My bedroom is plastered with posters of Kevin and Newcastle United players. I haven't decided whether or not to take Kevin down yet. But I think I might have to, because it'll be too upsetting to look at his face now he's gone.

I'll still support the Toon, but without Keegan it won't be the same. Kenny Dalglish, ex-manager of Blackburn, has taken over, but Kev's irreplaceable. Kenny's good, but it'd take a million Dalgishes to make one Keegan."

"Obsessed with a dead rock star"

Laura White, 17, (right) is obsessed with a rocker who died ten years before she was born...

The first time I heard a Rolling Stones record was four years ago when one of my brother's friends put on the song *Jumpin' Jack Flash*. I thought it was great. I mentioned the song to my dad and he got out loads of magazines and records he still had from the '60s.

That's when I first saw Brian Jones. He was the Stones' guitarist and I thought he was gorge! But reading on I found out he'd died in 1969 – 10 years before I was born. He was found dead in a swimming pool when he was just 27. No-one's sure what killed him, but it may have been linked to drink and drugs.

Honky tonk woman

The more I read about Brian, the more fascinated I became. He loved music and could play loads of different instruments. He also lived a true rock 'n' roll lifestyle. He was really into clothes and went to all the best clubs and parties. He was totally hip.

I began to collect Stones records and books about the band and Brian. I also found loads of posters in junk shops. Most of my friends are into bands like Oasis, but they just don't appeal to me. The music of today all sounds the same – totally unoriginal. These bands just follow what people have done in the

past. But back in the '60s, bands were innovative and had real charisma. There's just no-one like that now.

None of my friends knew who

**"The music of today
all sounds the
same – unoriginal"**

Brian Jones was until I explained. But now some of them are catching onto how cool the '60s were. They also listen to The Beatles, but only because Oasis always bang on about them.

Girl bonding

But there's one person I can talk to about Brian – his childhood sweetheart Pat Andrews. I met her last summer when I visited Brian's grave in Cheltenham on the anniversary of his death. Pat was

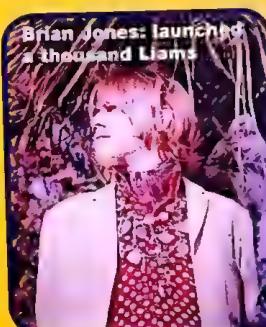
Brian's girlfriend between 1959 and 1963 (which was the year the Stones made it big). She also gave birth to his son.

I recognised her from photos, but didn't dare speak to her. But then this guy she was with

said his name was Richard, and he and Pat ran the official fan club. Richard's so into Brian, he bought the plot next to his in the cemetery!

Richard invited me to a meeting of the fan club that night. It gave me a chance to meet fellow fans and I even got talking to Pat. Since then we've become friends and she's told me more about how kind Brian was.

I value Pat's friendship because she's made me feel closer to him. I can't say if I'd be so interested in Brian if he was still alive – the fact he died young does add to the mystique. I may not be your average fan, but I think Bri's cool and I treasure his memory."



“Killer chocolate took my lad’s life”

Michelle, 17, watched in horror as her boyfriend **choked to death...**

From the moment Steve and I met, when I was just 14, we were totally in love. The chemistry between us was amazing – it was as if we'd known each other all our lives. Even though we went to different schools, we were so besotted we'd get together nearly every day at lunch and after school. People always said, 'Oh, Steve and Michelle – they're inseparable.'

We'd been together for a year when we decided to go out for a pizza one night, as a special treat. I got dressed up in a new white lace top, and at 6.30pm we caught the bus into town. Everything seemed so perfect.

When we got off the bus, Steve complained that he was hungry and couldn't wait until we got to the restaurant. So as we passed a petrol station, Steve nipped in and bought a bar of chocolate.

He ripped the wrapper off and stuffed his mouth full of chocolate, fooling around like he always did.

and sweat started pouring from his forehead and body.

I panicked and whacked him on the back, thinking I could dislodge whatever was choking him, but it didn't help. All I could do was watch as he collapsed at my feet.

I ran back into the petrol station to get help, but I was crying so hysterically they could hardly understand a word I said. Eventually they called an ambulance and I rushed back to Steve, too frightened to touch him. Three minutes later an ambulance arrived. They tried to resuscitate him, but it was too late. Steve was dead.

Losing you

I just stood there as they put his lifeless body into the ambulance. Everything moved in slow motion, as the police arrived and took me to the hospital. I never saw Steve again.

The inquest after Steve's death revealed that he'd actually died from a peanut allergy. He'd told me before that he was allergic to peanuts, but it

wasn't something I'd given much thought to. I don't think Steve realised how serious the allergy was either. He always thought it was a bit like food poisoning.

Although the bar of chocolate was plain and didn't have any nuts in it, later on we found a warning on the wrapper saying tiny amounts of peanut may be present. If I'd checked the ingredients, perhaps Steve would be alive today.

Never forget

The pain of Steve's death still hasn't disappeared, even though it was nearly two years ago. But I have a new boyfriend now, and he's very understanding about what happened.

To this day, I still worry when I see people gobbling down food. I stare at them closely, half imagining they'll drop down dead in front of me. It's silly I know, but I can't help it. Losing Steve is something I'll never forget."



“All I could do was watch helplessly as he collapsed at my feet”

In no time he'd finished it off. But a split second later he began to cough, then choke. At first I just thought his mouth was too full. But gradually his face went bright red

Advice

- Most first aid courses will teach you the anti-choking Heimlich manoeuvre (where you wrap your arms around the choker from behind, clasp your hands together in a fist, and pull up sharply into their stomach, just below the rib cage).
- Peanut allergies are deadly serious. Get medical advice and always check food ingredients – on everything you eat.
- For further advice and information, contact the **Anaphylaxis Campaign**, tel: 01252 318723.

If you have a real-life experience to share, send it to 'Reality bites', J17, 20 Orange Street, London WC2H 7ED. Please include your phone number in case we have to check any facts. If your story's printed we'll pay you up to £50.



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MARCH ISSUE ON
SALE FEBRUARY 12

YOU'D BE MAD
TO MISS IT!

1 UNHAPPY SHOPPER

Never mind feeling irritable and having sore boobs, when your hormones are on pre-menstrual setting most girls feel a sudden urge to shop. A word of advice: If you must go shopping when you're pre-menstrual, make sure you have no money about you. You're not responsible for your actions when you're primed to surf the crimson wave and that lime green jumpsuit that seemed such a good idea at the time will soon be banished to the furthest reaches of your wardrobe.

2 DON'T GO CHANGIN'

Pre-menstrual bloat or not, there's no greater humiliation than the communal changing room and its myriad mirrors. It's also the law that most shops have the least flattering lights and mirrors known to woman or beast. The trick is to keep everything, including the distorted size of your thighs, in perspective. A look at the other girls will show that there's solidarity in cellulite.

If you really can't handle girl bonding over your lumps and bumps, suss out shops which have individual changing rooms. Our tip: Oasis. Not only do they have private cubicles, but their lighting isn't too unflattering either.

3 FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHT TO, ER, TAKE STUFF BACK

If you've forked out your hard-earned moolah for an item, you're entitled to a refund if it's faulty. Legally, goods sold have to be: ★ Of satisfactory quality. ★ Fit for their purpose (a CD, for example, should be playable). ★ As described (if you buy an item, say, described as 100 per cent wool, it must contain 100 per cent wool). Strictly speaking, you can't take something back just 'cause you've decided brown really isn't the new black, but a lot of the larger chains are happy to refund all returned goods, unless they're damaged. Oh yes, and you'll be

pleased to know sale items are also returnable, unless their faults have been pointed out, ie, shop-soiled or seconds.

For further info, contact your local council's Trading Standards Dept. Their number'll be in the phone book.

4 ACTING ON IMPULSE

If you see what you want in the first shop you venture in and it fits, buy it there and then. It's the law of nature that if you go back an hour later they won't have it in your size or the colour you want. But if you're not sure, go away and think about it. If you return and it's still there, God is telling you to buy it – well, this is how we justify

clothes expenditure! If you buy the garment right away even though you're not sure, nine times out of ten you'll regret it.

5 MAKE-UP FOREVER

Wanna buy some cosmetics? Have we got some news for you:

★ Always test foundation on your face and get a look at it in daylight to check that it matches your skin tone. If you do buy a foundation that's a shade out, go back to where you bought it from and see if they'll give you a sample of the shade in the other direction, then you can blend

the two together.

★ Lipsticks should always be tested on your lips, because your lip tone is a completely different colour to your skin.

★ The only place you should test eye make-up is your hand – slap it around your eyes and you'll risk a nasty bout of conjunctivitis.

★ And blag it, girl! Most make-up counters should be happy to supply you with free samples of perfume and make-up, especially if you nag them long enough.

6 FAT IS A GIRL-POWER ISSUE

If you're one of the many girls who are a-rippin' with Rubenesque curves, remember that your fashion choices aren't limited to the

flowery frocks in your mum's catalogue or your local old ladies' shop. Evans now do a diffusion range called Seven for sizes 16 to 26, which features everything from hipsters to leather coats and hyperdelic print shirts. Jeffrey Rogers have a new chain of shops called Rogers + Rogers for sizes 16 to 24. Look out for their slinky, stretchy ankle-length skirts and velvet tops. Also worth checking out is Hennes' Big Is Beautiful range.

7 PERSONAL SHOPPER

If you trust yourself, then you're probably your own best shopping companion – you're quite prepared to go back to the same shop six times to make sure that those aqua hipsters match your Delux nail

varnish exactly. If you need some on-the-spot retail therapy though, take along your own personal shopper. Your best bud might not necessarily be the best woman for the job, especially if she's got zilch dress sense. You need someone with taste, preferably of the good variety – ie, very similar taste to your own, of course!

8 DEALING WITH SARKEY SHOP ASSISTANTS

Although 90 per cent of sales staff are dead nice, 10 per cent reckon that just 'cause you're young you're likely to be Britain's most successful shoplifter. If a shop assistant stalks you around the store and keeps asking pointedly, "Can I help you?" just try to ignore them or be nicely polite. If they actually ask you to leave the shop for no reason other than they don't like the look of you, get their name and write a letter of complaint to the shop's head office.

9 HOW LOW CAN YOU GO?

Getting bargains is about knowing how to stand up for your consumer rights. If you're queuing up to pay for the last shirt in your size and you notice there's a small mark on



"THE TRICK IS TO KEEP EVERYTHING
INCLUDING THE DISTORTED SIZE OF YOUR
THIGHS, IN PERSPECTIVE"

the collar or some loose threads, there's no harm asking for a reduction. It probably means you won't be able to return it, but if it's a bargain that's cool.

If you (or more likely your parents) are going to buy something pretty major like a new hi-fi, it's worth shopping around. There's nothing worse than finding a stereo's £70 cheaper in another shop when you've already shelled out your hard-earned cash. Some shops are also prepared to offer reductions for cash on expensive items - but if you never ask, you'll never know.

10 PANIC ATTACK

Plan your mall trip like a military operation. That means comfy footwear, taking regular breaks and stopping between shops for energy-sustaining snacks like, er, coffee, choccy 'n' crisps.

And try not to throw a tantrum just because there are no brightly coloured carriers on your wrist after an hour. It's another weirdy law that when you have no money you see loads of things you want and, yep, when your wad weighs you down, there ain't nothing you like. Aaargh!



backstreet boys
just seventeen

The prodigies

As another British 12-year-old gears up for university, J17 wonders whether being a super-brain is a gain or a pain...

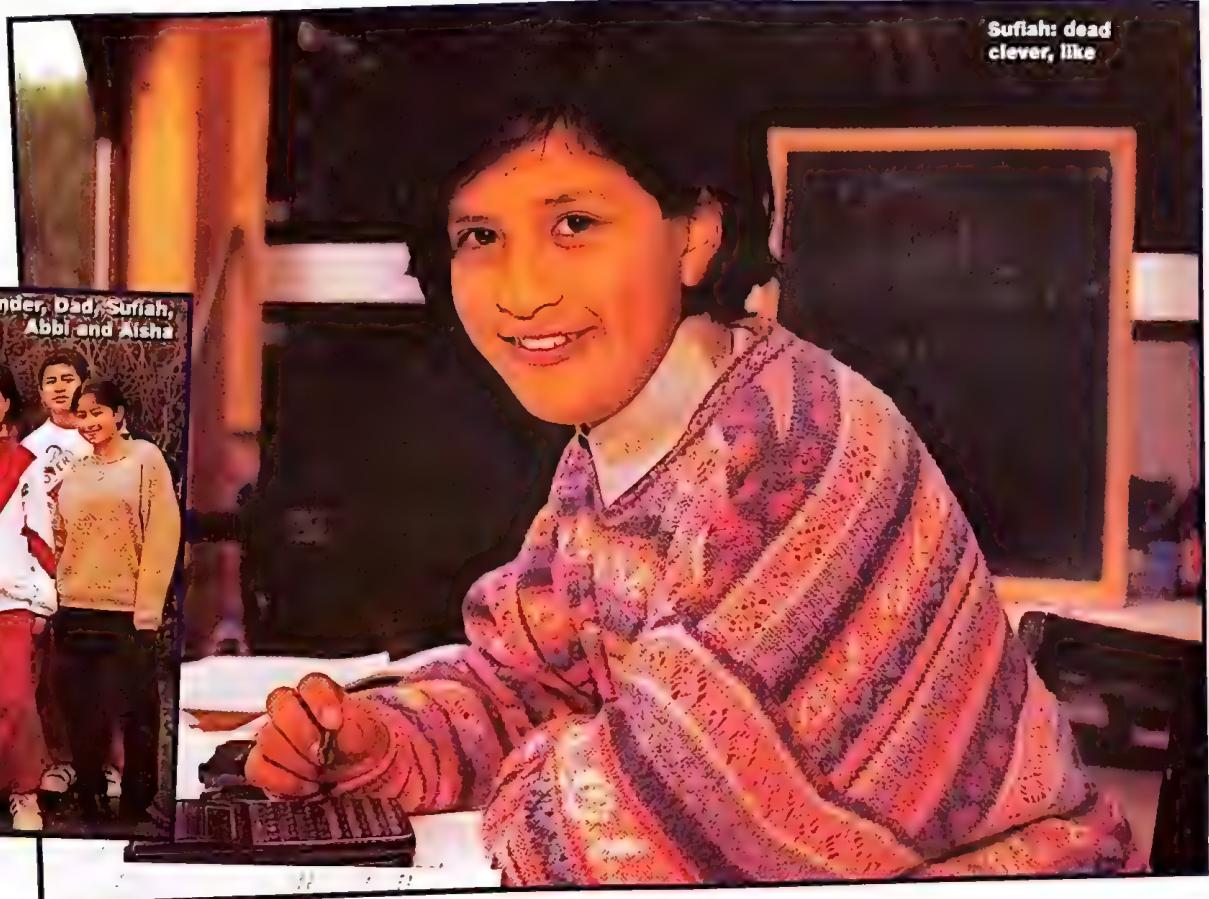
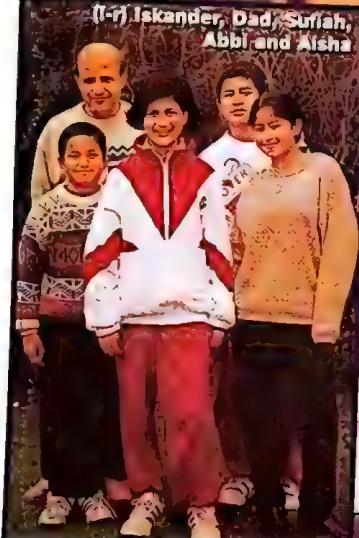
Come autumn, instead of settling in at secondary school, 12-year-old Northampton girl Sufiah Yusof will begin a maths degree at Oxford.

"I have no regrets going to university at my age," says the girl genius. "I'd get bored otherwise."

Sufiah comes from a family of prodigies. Her sister Aisha, 14, and brothers Iskander, ten, are all maths geniuses expecting to enter Oxford next year, while their three-year-old brother

Zuleika has a reading age of seven. She and her older siblings all play tennis at a national level, too.

But Sufiah dislikes her super-brain label and says she just works hard at a subject she enjoys. Unlike most 12-year-olds, however, Sufiah tutors students six years older than herself, and is taught at home by her father because she finds school work too easy! Dad's confident that Sufiah is level-headed enough to handle an all-girl college, especially as the family plans to move to Oxford to support her. She's even been interviewed by a child psychologist, who agrees. But will she fit in and be happy? J17 talks to two gifted teens about the blessing – and the curse – of being a young genius.



Sufiah: dead clever, like

Dawn, 15, is happy being an intellectual whizz-kid...

66 When I was little, Mum described me as 'four-going-on-40'! At primary school, I didn't have many friends, but it didn't bother me 'cause I'm quite a loner. School work was never a problem. To me, most subjects were very easy. I've always enjoyed books and I used to take big, boring-looking ones to read when the teacher was talking or I'd finished the work early.

I was teased, but my father

always said, 'It's best to match bullies with wit, not weight', so I'd just make a joke of it.

Book worm

When I went to a comprehensive secondary school, I was nervous that I wouldn't fit in. At first, I did get teased a bit because I was reading the classics and a lot of people thought, 'What is she on?' But to me, it seemed perfectly natural. Also, when our essays came back marked, everybody apart from me would be told

where they'd gone wrong, but I always got straight 'A's.

My school mates called me 'the brain of Britain' – as well as some more unpleasant names – but I'd usually make friends of potential enemies by helping them with their homework.

Luckily, my English teacher

realised immediately that I had unusual talent. I'd already read all our

"I got teased 'cause I was reading the classics"

textbooks, but she never tried to hold me back or make an example of me. She even encouraged me to read my own books in class when I'd finished the work early.

digies!

People think all gifted children have been pushed by their parents, but that's not true. Mine have always supported me, but they've never forced me to study. If I had been pressurised, it would've made me very insecure.

It is difficult for parents. There's a lot of help for children with learning difficulties, but very little for gifted kids. Maybe that's why so many are taught at home and then feel obliged to go on to university. I think that's a very dangerous path.

School's not just an educational experience. It's also a social and emotional one which teaches you how to deal with people.

People go through so many changes during their time at school, which is why they're usually the best years of your life. If Sufiah goes to Oxford, she may be prepared academically, but she'll still be a 12-year-old girl exposed to all the emotional problems of an 18-year-old, which could be pretty disturbing."

Alexander, 14, hates his egg-head image...

At primary school, I was about two years ahead of the other pupils. I'd always put my hand up in class because I loved being tested, but people thought I was showing off and it wasn't long before I got picked on. I was sworn at constantly and called names like 'boff' and 'creep'.

When I began secondary school, I hoped I'd make a fresh start, but because I was clever I stuck out like a sore thumb. The teachers were always reading my essays and poetry out loud, which was really embarrassing.

My favourite subjects are English, poetry and history. I'm well advanced in history and

English, but my teachers make me work to everyone else's level which is frustrating because I could learn a lot more.

Yearn to learn

I just find it easier than other people to take in information. If I'm told something, it sticks first time. I know a lot more facts and figures than the other pupils, and I want to learn as much as possible, which means that I'm often one step ahead of the teachers.

I spend a lot of time lapping up reference books, and I'm also interested in political issues, Europe and programmes like *Panorama* and *World in Action*. To blend in, I pretended to

"To blend in, I deliberately did less well in tests"

be interested in sport, and deliberately did less well in tests. But it didn't work. The other boys would pin me down and yell at me, or punch me in the stomach.

The whole thing destroyed my self-confidence and after a while I kept to myself and stopped doing a lot of things I enjoyed.

I'm in year nine now and the bullying's not so bad, but it's ruined a big part of my life. Being gifted can be very lonely and depressing because you become a target for jealous kids.

When someone's brilliant at sport, everyone thinks they're

great, but when it's an academic talent, people think you're a boring teacher's pet. I'm not boring, I'm just different."

So what is this thing called genius? J17 asked the experts...

James Whybra, founder of GIFT Ltd, specialises in counselling gifted children

"Exceptionally able children come from all backgrounds and social classes. But coping with their gift owes more to peer pressure than whether they attend a state or private school.

Many people are outraged when they see 12 or 13 year-olds going to university, complaining that they'll be denied a childhood. But many of these gifted children are desperate for more of an academic challenge and prefer mixing with older people.

Going to university early isn't for everybody. The pupil, their parents, teachers and a psychologist will decide together if they're mature enough to handle it."

Dr Ludwig Lowenstein treats children who can't cope with the pressures of their own genius

"I see children from four to 14 whose ability to learn is much greater than that of their peers. Because of this, they're often frustrated, stressed and easily misunderstood. They may seem lazy, bored, awkward, withdrawn, have nervous habits or act disruptively. Some are bullied, depressed or even suicidal. We help them deal with their talents."

Signs of a gifted teen:

- ★ prefers adult company
- ★ pays no attention in lessons, then gets homework right
- ★ is good at chess, music and sport
- ★ is a perfectionist
- ★ asks questions a lot
- ★ is a loner
- ★ gets bored easily
- ★ deliberately under-achieves due to peer pressure
- ★ loves arguing

J17 investigates



Sufiah follows in the footsteps of these famous prodigies

Ruth Lawrence, who...

- never attended school
- created her own computer programs at the age of seven
- at nine became the youngest person to pass pure maths A-Level (with a grade 'A')
- took up a place at Oxford at 12 – the youngest student ever at a UK uni
- scored the highest maths mark in living memory in her first-year exam
- shared a student house with her father. They also cycled to college on a tandem and studied together
- was branded Oxford's least popular student in a college paper
- at 13 became Britain's youngest-ever graduate (first class honours)
- now 25, lectures at a top college abroad

Adam Dent, who...

- was taught at home from the age of eight
- gained four GCSE 'A' grades aged 11 and joined the sixth form
- got nicknamed 'Doogie' after TV boy genius Doogie Howser
- won a place at Oxford at 12
- at 14 became Britain's youngest undergraduate to study chemistry



Further info

- National Association For Gifted Children (tel: 01908 673677) Counsels families of gifted children. From next September, they'll also run a special 11+ youth project.
- GIFT Ltd (tel: 01277 654228) Runs courses for gifted youngsters between the ages of four and 18.
- MENSA (tel: 01902 772771) A society for highly intelligent people. Members include Carol Vorderman and Jimmy Savile.



BLURGER KINGS

Damon and co are back to top the charts again. And they've gone weird! J17 susses out what's been happening in Blur-land since their titanic struggle with the 'Sis...

Remember when the Oasis vs Blur battle was bigger news than Spice Girls? The tussle between *Country House* and *Roll With It* made *Top Of The Pops* and *News At Ten*. But though Blur won that particular fight by getting to the top slot, Oasis have gone on to be the biggest band around. When their album *What's The Story (Morning Glory?)* went on to sell truckloads more than Blur's *The Great Escape*, it looked like we'd seen the last of Damon's boys.

All change

But now they're back. You'll have heard the No. 1 single, *Beetlebum*, and their new album (imaginatively titled, er, *Blur*) is hitting record shops now. But they're not the knees-up, cockerel kings of old. Oh no. *Blur* is weird and spookier than any of their other albums. But the band are well chuffed with it. Damon says, "We haven't made a

shiny pop record, 'cause what's going on now is the opposite of what it was when we were making shiny pop records. We have our own integrity, that's what keeps us strong and what keeps us together, and it doesn't always fit in with the present wisdom of what's cool and what's not cool." Right on, Damon! That's why the album doesn't have chirpy 'wink-a-long' ditties.

This time it's more about the divine Mr Albarn himself: "I'm not singing

about bank managers any more. I'm singing about me!" So on *Blur* he's baring his soul and singing about how he feels rather than about made-up, wacky characters.

"There's no *Country House*,

There's nothing vaguely 'comedy' on this record."

So why this dramatic change from the Blur we all knew and loved? Well, strange as it may seem, the boys weren't happy with *The Great Escape*. Graham Coxon, the band's guitar wizard, says, "We were collecting awards and going out and getting drunk when we recorded it. It was an odd situation.

We were smiling when we wanted to be screaming. I was sick of the jolliness

"I felt like shoving my guitar through my amp and running offstage!"

of the music. It seemed absurd to me to be on the road doing things like *Country House* when I felt like shoving my guitar through my amp and running offstage." Oh dear, you poor love.

Blur played only one show last year, in Dublin on 22 June. They previewed songs from the new album, and treated their Irish fans to a mega-show. But the band got tired of playing such huge gigs. On their recent tour they played shows in tiny venues, finishing up in Damo's favourite seaside town, Southend-on-Sea.

Ice to see you

After a holiday in Iceland a few years ago, Damon and the boys decided it was the perfect place to clear their heads. "The middle of Iceland's just like the moon," explains Alex. "You feel filled up with nature and completely regenerated." That's probably why they decided to record part of *Blur* there. But Damon got a nasty shock after he'd left Iceland with an enormous stone he'd found on the side of a volcano. When he arrived back in Blighty he heard



that the volcano had erupted. Damon's convinced he somehow annoyed the spooksome volcano-dwelling spirits in Iceland...

Annoyed spirits or not, it wasn't a happy-bunny sitch, friend-wise, while the foursome recorded the album. Damon and Graham have admitted that at one point last year they weren't the best of pals - it seems that continually touring and recording together had finally got to the two chums. Damon says, "I got really frustrated and upset, but I never stopped loving him like... well, he's like a brother really."

The troublesome two only contacted each other through letters. "We wrote to each other after we toured. It was easier to write and we got everything straight like that." But they seem to have put their differences firmly behind them now: "Graham giving up drinking was massively important, because it returned

our relationship to what it used to be," Damon muses.

Bovver boys

Graham isn't getting on so well with Alex James, the floppy-fringed bass player extraordinaire. While Graham's now a clean-living, indie-obsessed chap, Alex is still living a wild lifestyle and doesn't seem bothered about his contribution to the band's new sound. "I'm happy just to play the bass. It's probably the easiest job in the whole world," shrugs the Jamester.

Blur seem happier now they've found their 'new direction'. Damon wants Blur to be an 'art school' (ie. clangy and difficult to sing along to) band. They've declared Britpop to be dead, and look set to become the moody boys at the back of the pop class. And those boys are always the most interesting...

It's all a Blur...

Exactly what the jiggins have the four Beetlebimmers been up to for the past year?



Graham

The spec-sporting guitarist has been indulging his love of mega-obscure underground bands this year. J17 has spotted him at gigs by the likes of The Make Up, Braniac, and Slant 6 (like, who?). He's also given up the old falling-down water and feels much better for it. The first song he wrote for the new album, *You're So Great*, was about giving up drink. Sadly, it's said, Graham has split up with his girlfriend Jo, who played bass in oldster riot grrl band, Huggy Bear. He's also learned to play the didgendoo (curious pipe-like

Oz instrument) which his folks bought him after a holiday there.



Damon

Damon's love affair with Iceland continues. After going on holiday to Birksville, he bought a house there, though he's still living in Notting Hill

with Justine. He made a fool of himself recently when he turned up drunk at a swank eaterie to be interviewed with Justine for a snooty magazine. He astonished everyone by falling asleep, leaving Justine to apologise for him. But he showed a more cultural side when he read at the Poetry Olympics in the Albert Hall last year. Damo's also been listening to, er, US bands - this from the chap who used to declare himself 'anti-grunge'.

Finally, Damon's in a gangster film, *Face*, being shot in London and starring Robert Carlyle (from TV's *Hamish Macbeth* and, er, *Trainspotting*). His role was specially written for him - his character's even called Damon!

Dave

Dave flies his plane as much as possible, is settled in London with his wife and cats, and is still seen as the band's sensible one. But

in Iceland, he jumped into a lake of freezing water from the top of a high cliff. Not that sensible, really.

Alex

Puppy-eyed, droopy-haired Alex is still living it up in trendy London clubs - unlike Graham, he

most certainly hasn't given up the booze. Last year he had a hit single with his Me Me Me 'supergroup' formed with Justin from Elastica and old popster

Stephen Duffy. And, unlike Damon, he seems to have forgiven Noel Gallagher for wishing Alex and Damon would die of AIDS, and reckons it was just a playground squabble.





Steph

Poppy print mesh top £21.99 from **Kookai** ★ Gold cross style no: 234/233 £11.35 and twist hoop earrings style no: 211/8914 £27.99 both from **Argos** ★ Blue cords approx £52 from **The Original Levi Store** ★ Adidas trainers £49.99 from **JD Sports**

Molly

Pale green nylon jacket £39 from **Sisley** ★ Grey knee-length skirt £14 by **Trutex** ★ Red patent clip-top bag from a selection by **Dollargrand** ★ Casio divers watch style no: 252/7945 £19.95 from **Argos**

FEEL THE
WORLD

Smart vs cool – cheeky chicks on a chopping trip...



Steph
Yellow cherry-print top
£49 by **Sue Rowe**
available from **Hype DF**
★ Gold George and
Dragon earrings style no:
208/1072 £24.75 from
Argos ★ Denim
workwear jeans £24.99
from **H&M Hennes**
★ Nike trainers £59.99
from **JD Sports**

Molly
Pink floral mesh
shirt £27.50
from **Miss
Selfridge**
★ Turquoise
shell suit long
skirt £65 from
Red or Dead

Steph
Pink T-shirt £22 from
Chiple ★ Beige
button-front skirt £42
and striped canvas
belt £19.99 both
from **Red or Dead**



Molly
Blue mesh
top with
Union Jack
logo £30
by **Soviet**
★ Brown
hipsters £40
by **Chatters**

Win 'n' mix



Flip 'n' mix



Molly
Beige velour print dress £29.99 from **Diva** ★ Blue All Stars £29.99 by **Converse**
Steph
Brown and blue patterned shirt £31 from **Benetton** ★ Blue shorts £39.99 from **Pepe**



Steph
Grey shell-suit jacket from a selection at **Red or Dead** ★ Blue short-sleeved shirt £25 by **Trigger Happy** ★ Denim skirt £16.99 from **River Island**



Steph
White nylon biker jacket £71.99 by **Pepe** ★ Pale blue pencil skirt from a selection by **Antoni and Alison** ★ Black and yellow pool shoes £12 from **Red or Dead**



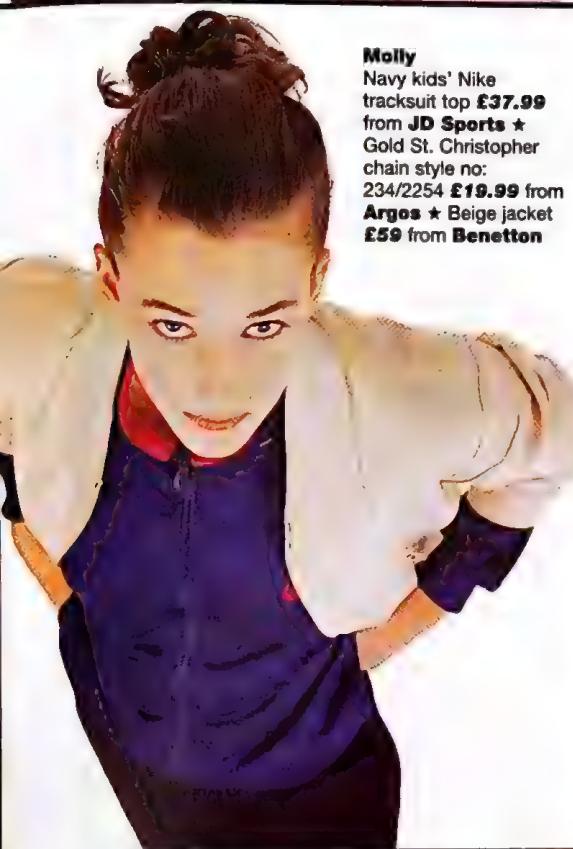
Molly
Brown pinstripe trousers £35 by **Chatters** ★ Adidas trainers £49.99 from **JD Sports**



Molly
Piggy T-shirt £11.49
(incl p&p) by
Prototype ★ Blue
cord jacket £60 by
Trigger Happy



Steph
Pink shirt
£24.99 from
Jeffrey
Rogers ★
Black square
frame glasses
from a selection
by **Kirk**
Originals



Molly
Navy kids' Nike
tracksuit top £37.99
from **JD Sports** ★
Gold St. Christopher
chain style no:
234/2254 £19.99 from
Argos ★ Beige jacket
£59 from **Benetton**



Molly
Cropped
halterneck top
£29.99 by **Diva**
★ Navy shell-suit
trousers from a
selection at **Red**
or Dead



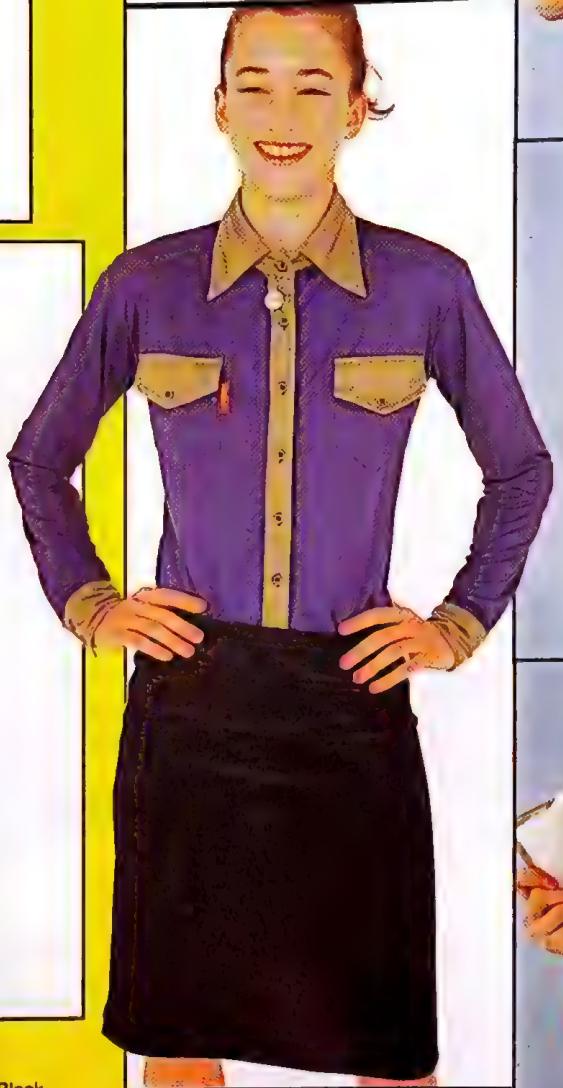
Molly
Yellow mesh top £27
by **Komodo** available
at **Hype** ★ Grey
trousers £43 from
Sisley ★ Brown
wedge sandals
£64.99 from **Shellys**

Flip 'n' mix



Molly

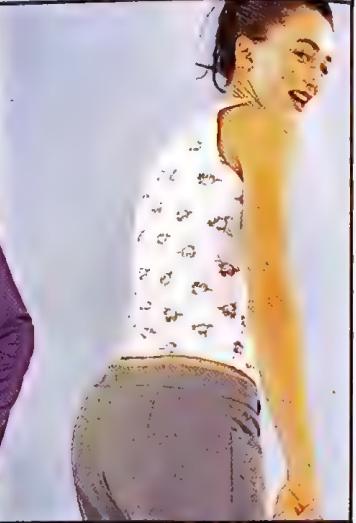
Pink velour top £25 from **French Connection** ★ White nylon jacket £39.95 from **Naf Naf** ★ Lilac brocade hipsters £60 from **Chiple** ★ Black patent strappy sandals £34.99 style no.: 48B 297L from **Grattan**



Molly

Navy shirt with olive trim £30 by **Trigger Happy**
 ★ Gold St. Christopher chain style no.: 234 2254 £19.99 from **Argos**
 ★ Navy velour stretch skirt £47 from **Red or Dead**

Molly
 Cherub vest £14.99 from **Knickerbox**
 ★ Grey flat-fronted trousers £30 from **Miss Selfridge** ★ Second-hand white beaded purse £4.50 from **The Observatory**



Photos: Janine Wilks Hair and make-up: Britta Dicke Fashion: Lara S

Where it's at!

A Antoni & Alison 0171-275 7033

B Benetton 0171-731 4584

C Chatters 0171-438 5885 **D** Chiple 3 Langley Court, London W1, D171-494 1240/01527 61828

E Empire Catalogue 0345 200400

F French Connection 249-251 Regent Street, London W1 0171-580 2507
G H&M Hennes Oxford Circus, London W1

H Converse 01372 740033

I Diva 0171-637 0267
J Dollargrand 0171-794 3028
K Empire Catalogue 0345 200400
L French Connection 249-251 Regent Street, London W1 0171-580 2507
M Kirk Original 35 Earham Street, London WC2 0171-255 2031
N Knickerbox 0800 393624
O Kookai 123 Kensington High Street, London W8 0171-938 3801
P JD Sports 267-269 Oxford Street, London W1, 0171-491 7677
Q Jeffrey Rogers 0171-208 4300
R Kookai 123 Kensington High Street, London W8 0171-938 3801
S Levi's 01604 790436
T Miss Selfridge 0171-436 8280
U Naf Naf 328 Oxford Street, London W1
V Pepe 0171-836 8666
W Prototype 0171-372 7989
X Red Or Dead 0171-379 7571
Y River Island 0181-830 4442
Z Shellys Oxford Circus, London W1 0181-450 0066
AA Sisley 0161-929 9259 **BB** Soviet 0171-830 4442

P 0171-580 4447

Pope 0171-836 8666
Protoype 0171-372 7989
Red Or Dead 0171-379 7571
River Island 0181-830 4442
Shellys Oxford Circus, London W1 0181-450 0066
Sisley 0161-929 9259
Soviet 0171-830 4442

4455

The Observatory 20 Greenwich Church Street, London SE10 0181-305 1998
Top Shop Oxford Circus, London W1 0171-291 2351
Trigger Happy 0181-830 4442
Tutex 01200 22657
BB Indicates mail order service

Beauty & fashion

MOST WANTED

Best buys and hot hair 'n' slap tips...

Lipsmackin'



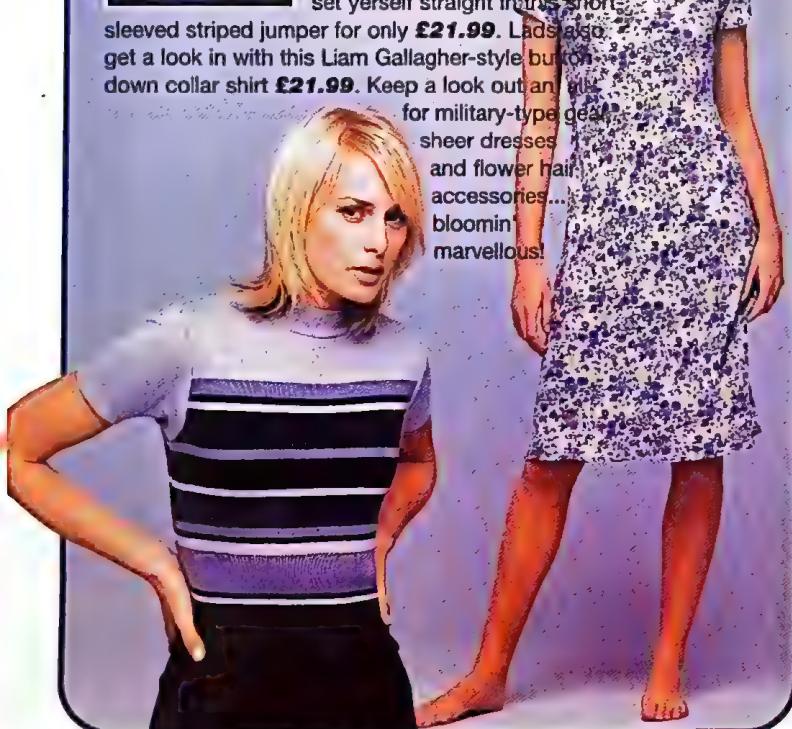
Make sure your lips look and taste delicious with funky flavoured glosses from **Bonne Bell** (cred note: it's pronounced 'bonny bell'). Already must-haves in every American high-school locker, Bonne Bell Lip Lix £1.99 and Lip Tints £2.49 give the glossiest, softest, yummiest lips and come in super-cool flavas: check out 'Milkshake-It', 'Espresso-Yo-Self' and 'Mocha Malt'. Get down to Superdrug sharpish.

Bluetones



New blue you

Feelin' blue ain't all that bad... in fact, it's the colour to be, and **River Island's** new range is teeming with sea 'n' sky shades. Hippy chicks will lurve this floral print dress £29.99 which looks cool worn with **Cat** boots. Or set yerself straight in this short-sleeved striped jumper for only £21.99. Lads... get a look in with this Liam Gallagher-style button-down collar shirt £21.99. Keep a look out and... for military-type gear, sheer dresses and flower hair accessories... bloomin' marvellous!



Hot tip: rub a tiny bit of lipstick into cheeks for the latest high-flush look

Sharklife



Not keen on sharks? Well, you may change your mind when you try a new Australian spot treatment by **Ketsugo**. The miracle ingredient in this spray is shark liver oil which re-balances greasy skin - you should see results after just two weeks of use. Get the treatment from Superdrug and selected outlets for £12.50 and for more info call the Ketsugo helpline on 01892 531300. We've got 30 sprays to give away - send your name and address on a postcard to J17/Ketsugo offer, Australian Bodycare, Bodycare House, 15b Church Rd, Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, TN4 0RX. Winners are picked at random after 5 March.



Tower blocks

Get an eyeful of these gravity-defying new arrivals at **Miss Selfridge**.

The '70s revival's

seen the return of platform shoes Gary

Glitter'd give his right

shoulder pad for Naomi Campbell's famous for falling

off them (and yer mum's probably got a few scars too!), but once you've got your balance you'll be walkin' tall!



Think pink



You don't have to go for way-out colours to be hip this season. Pink is not only perfect for pale complexions, it was also the designer choice for the spring catwalk shows. **Collection 2000's** range of rosy tones'll give you catwalk style at high-street prices...

- Give cheeks a rosy glow with Powder Blusher no 28 'Blossom Pink' £1.29.
- Shade eyes with Sextet Eyeshadow no 13 'Lupin', 'Mauvette' and 'Dusty Pink', all from £1.75.
- Line lips with Lip Liner no 4 'Rose' £1.19 and fill in with Lipstick no 21 'Orchid Bouquet' £1.19.
- Coat nails with shimmery petal-pink Nail Polish no 57 'Frostique' £1.19.



Stamp your feet, click your fingers and demand adoration from your hordes of admirers. With designers going wild for frills and ruffles this season, and Madonna's *Evita* igniting a trend for postbox red lips and nails, glamour girls look set to take centre stage this spring...

Star quality

Goddesses know there are times when the natural look just won't cut it. Attract attention with the help of a little powder 'n' paint...

★ Don't skip the foundation – this look isn't about warts 'n' all beauty. Just go for a flawless finish. And don't be tempted to use foundation that's darker than your natural skin colour – it's not flattering and can look like a mask. Also, if you're wearing a skimpy dress, your pale arms and chest will give you away. Add concealer if you need it.

★ Powder well, and chuck a compact of pressed powder in your bag for touch-ups when you're out on the town.

★ If your brows are looking bushy, pluck 'em. Use a dab of baby's teething gel beforehand to make it less ouchsome. Then brush upwards and outwards and use a pencil to create a sleek arch. Softly flush cheeks with a pale rose blusher.

★ Shade the whole of your upper

eyelid and near the brow with a soft pinky eyeshadow. **Colourings** eyeshadows (£3.95 each) come in flattering shades such as 'Mallow' (good for pale skins) and 'Dusky Rose' (for darker skins). Blend in a little white highlighter below the eyebrow.

★ Liquid eyeliner may be a bit tricky to get the hang of, but it's worth a go. Once it's on, it won't smudge and fade like eye pencils tend to. After lining your upper lashes, coat the upper and lower lashes with black mascara.

★ Bright red lipstick makes you look and feel super-glamorous. Apply after lining your lips with a matching lip pencil (it's much easier to get a neat outline with a pencil than with lipstick).



Prima

advice

Write to: Anita Nair, Nick Fisher or Annabel G, Advice, Just 17, 20 Orange Street, London WC2H 7ED. It would be helpful if you could include your age and the area you live in. Unfortunately Just 17's Advice columnists cannot answer your problems on the telephone. If you have an urgent problem, please contact ChildLine free on 0800 1111 – we work very closely with them – or Caroline on 0181 514 1177 (calls to Caroline will be charged at the local rate and will appear on your phone bill).

He's three years my junior

I'm a sixth former and often spend time helping other classes at school. In one class there's this boy I fancy. The problem is, he's 14. We've got off with each other, but I'm too embarrassed to go out with him. He's mature for his age, but he looks really young and I'm worried about what people will say. Help! **Verity (17), Norwich**

● The only way to work this out is to weigh up your options. It's no good dating if you're embarrassed about it – this will hurt his feelings and leave you feeling guilty. Try not to feel bad about this. Everyone worries about what people think. One solution is to stay friends, without making a commitment. Time will tell if you want more or not.



I'm feeling left out

I used to be part of this great crowd. We were all pretty cool, even though we had a reputation for being off with people we didn't like. Now I'm being excluded by them and I don't know why. Out of the blue I'm the one they're giving the cold treatment to and spreading rumours about. I've tried to talk to them and apologise

(even though I haven't done anything wrong), but they just laugh it off. Please help. **Tina (14), Essex**

● As you've discovered the hard way, in-crowds are only fun when you're part of one. Your so-called friends obviously need someone to pick on to be happy.

But now you know how it feels to be excluded and lied about, why on earth would you want to be back in with them? They may seem a better option than being on your own, but remember, while you're with them you'll have no

chance of making any real friends. Look around you and see if you can make friends with someone who won't exclude you just for the sake of it – someone who

won't spread nasty rumours about you for a laugh.

He takes drugs

I'm 15 and have been going out with my boyfriend for six months. The problem is, my mum's heard he smokes weed. She's warned me to dump him if I see him with it and said she'd be very disappointed in me if I don't. I really love him and couldn't bear to lose him. On the other hand, I'm very close to my mum and would hate for that to change. What should I do? **Prodigy fan, London**

● The first thing to do is to talk to your boyfriend about his supposed habit. Don't start by accusing him, because the rumours might be untrue. But if he does admit to it, try to find out how often your boyfriend smokes dope. Remember, although you can't make him stop, you can tell him how much you disapprove of it.

You can also ask him to keep his habit well away from you. After all, just because he wants to be involved in something illegal, doesn't mean he has the right to bring you into it as well.

I said no to sex

I'm in love with a friend of the family who's the same age as me (15). But I only see him four or five times a year because he lives in Spain.

At Christmas he and his family came to stay for a week, and during this time he told me he'd been in love with me for ages. Then he asked to have sex with me. I said no because I'm a virgin, but then regretted it. Now he's gone and I feel so lost. I think about him all the time and can't concentrate. Have I ruined things completely? **BR, Wilts**

● If saying no to sex has ruined things, then I think you've had a lucky escape. It's all very well for him to say he loves you, but to ask you to have sex with him was impractical, not to mention illegal. You only see this guy a few times a year and, what's more, he lives abroad. This isn't a great basis for

a relationship, never mind a sexual one.

Do yourself a favour and take things slowly. Write to him and tell him how much you like him. Establish a strong friendship, before you even think about getting physical.



Be sure, be safe and remember sex under 16 is illegal

ALL OUR LETTERS ARE GENUINE

J17

Lovers' tiffs

My best male friend is going out with my best mate, and they're making my life miserable. They bicker all the time, and I'm always pulled into the middle of it. Either he's moaning about her at my house, or she's crying on the phone. They always make up, but then I don't see them until the fights start again.

Annoyed (16), Hull



Anita Naik

● Sometimes it's not worth getting involved with other people's problems, especially when they don't seem to want your advice. It sounds like your friends enjoy a stormy relationship – and it's just one big game to them.

Refuse to be part of it by making it clear you don't want to hear any more. The next time they call you up or try to pull you into their fight, cut short their visit or phone call. It's only by walking away that you'll give yourself some peace.

body talk

Emergency protection

Recently I heard two friends of mine talking about the morning-after pill and saying how cool it is. I didn't want to say anything at the time and appear stupid, but I don't know anything about it. For example, can I just buy it from the chemists' or do I have to go and see my doctor? Help! **J17 fan (16)**

● Emergency contraception (the correct name for the morning-after pill) isn't available in shops. As its name indicates, it's for emergency use only and can be administered by your GP, local family planning clinic or Brook Advisory Centre (ring 0171-713 9000 for your nearest branch).

Basically, emergency contraception is a high-dose contraceptive and it's completely different from the standard contraceptive Pill. It must be taken

within 72 hours (three days) of unprotected intercourse.

It's taken in two doses, 12 hours apart, and works by altering the hormone balance in your body to prevent pregnancy. It's 96 per cent effective but, as it contains high levels of hormones, it can make you feel sick. A follow-up visit to your doc is usually required, just to check all is well.

Help yourself by...

- Always using a condom when you have sex, as this will protect you from pregnancy, STDs and HIV – the virus that can lead to AIDS.
- Going along to your nearest Brook Advisory Clinic – preferably before you have sex – and getting advice on what contraception is best for you.
- Remembering that withdrawal is not a method of contraception.



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18

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boy's view

For a boy's view on your problems, write to Nick Fisher, Advice, Just 17, 20 Orange Street, London WC2H 7ED. He's happy to answer letters from male readers too.



Nick Fisher

I'm scared of rejection

Just before the Christmas break, I got really friendly with a girl in my class. We became so close everyone was saying it wouldn't be long before we got together. I got really excited at the thought of going out with her, but now I think I've blown it. Basically, I've been so terrified she'll turn me down I haven't had the guts to ask her out. Two months have passed now, and we don't talk to each other as much or even sit together. What should I do?

Boy's view fan (15)

• If you really like this girl and you're fairly sure she feels the same about you, then why haven't you asked her out? Are you scared others will laugh if she says no? Whatever the reason, you need to overcome it or you'll kick yourself when she starts going out with someone else.

If you don't want to ask her and feel pressured into it by everyone else, fine – then don't. But if you do like her and feel she's slipping away from you because you haven't plucked up the courage, then it's time you started plucking! You could end up feeling miserable if you let her go. Isn't that worse than taking a risk?



I want to be loved

All the girls I hang out with have boyfriends, except me. I feel I'm missing out on something. The couples I know seem dead happy, and my mates are always on about their boyfriends – it's really irritating. Half the time I can't even imagine what it must be like to be loved! The thing is, it's not as if I don't try. I'm always talking to boys but none of them are ever interested. Am I rushing things here, or is it just that boys don't like forward girls?

3T fan (16)

• You may not believe this, but most teenagers aren't in relationships. In fact, if you surveyed all the 16-year-olds in Britain, you'd find most are in the same situation as you.

I know it's weird when all your mates are talking about boyfriends and you see couples everywhere, but it's much better to wait until you find someone you really like than to get a boyfriend for the sake of it. After all, having no boyfriend is better than having a bad one.

You're doing exactly the right thing by mixing with lads. And sooner or later you'll find one who's interested in you. Believe me.

If they're resorting to violence, you need help. Whatever you do, don't hit them back, it'll only make things worse. Instead, call ChildLine on 0800 1111 or Careline on 0181-514 1177. Tell them exactly what's happening – they can give you practical advice and support.

Also try talking to a teacher, school counsellor or relative you trust. Remember, no-one deserves this sort of abuse at home. You need someone to intervene until things change. Get on the phone now. Calls to Childline won't show up on any phone bill, and are dealt with in total confidence. Good luck!

He said our love died

My boyfriend recently broke up with me. At the time I pretended not to care, but I can't stop thinking about him and it's really upsetting me. Basically, I don't believe his reason for ending it. All he said was that we'd grown apart and our love had died. The thing is, I can't help feeling it's an excuse for him to go out with someone else. Why can't guys tell the truth?

Upset J17 fan

• When relationships come to an end, people often say stupid things, either because they want to hurt the other half, or because they desperately don't want to hurt them. In truth, most relationships do end, and often there's no real reason.

Maybe you've outgrown each other, or he needs space. Maybe he did have his eye on another girl, maybe he didn't. But whatever the reason, don't let it undermine your confidence. There's nothing wrong with you, and you'll meet someone else in time.

Instead of torturing yourself, just try to let him go. The sooner you can accept he's gone – and live with the fact that there may be no real reason – the sooner you can relax and get on with your life. Be positive and put it behind you.

BROTHERHOOD WORLD TOUR 1997



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confidential

Send your sex-related problems to Annabel G, Advice, Just 17, 20 Orange Street, London WC2H 7ED. It would be helpful if you could include your age.



Annabel G

He insulted my breasts

Over the past six months my breasts have grown a lot. My boyfriend was touching them the other day when he said, 'Urgh, what are those little red lines?' I'd seen them in the bath before, but was too scared to show my mum and just hoped they'd go away. Now he's said this, I'm worried there's something wrong with me. Please help.



supple. Try using a slick of baby oil after a warm bath. And as for your lad, I'm sure he's got myriad blips and blotches about his person. So tell him to keep his opinions to himself. This is an exciting time, as your body is developing into womanhood. Don't let him spoil it for you!

J17 fan (16)

● Don't fret, you're not getting a map of the M25 on your boobs – honest! The fine lines you've noticed are known as stretch marks and they're very common during puberty. When parts of your anatomy grow quite rapidly (in this case your breasts, but stretch marks can appear on your thighs too), the skin has to stretch that bit extra which causes the little red lines. In time these lines will fade, become silvery in tone and well-nigh invisible to the naked eye. Most girls have stretch marks, and they're nothing to worry about.

Unfortunately you can't magic them away, but you can help

your skin by keeping it soft and

supple. Try using a slick of baby oil after a warm bath. And as for your

lad, I'm sure he's got myriad blips and blotches about his person. So

tell him to keep his opinions to himself. This is an exciting time, as

your body is developing into womanhood. Don't let him spoil it for you!

The sex Files

'Tis well known that many lads fret about the size of their tackle. In fact, when a team of American researchers asked 600 boys if they'd ever measured their willies, 63 per cent said yes! The remaining 37 per cent presumably had better things to do with their rulers. Yeah, right.

I'm all wet

I'm really worried because when my boyfriend fingers me I always get really wet. It's horrible. Is this normal, and why does it happen? Also, is there any way I can stop it from happening? It's so embarrassing!

Name withheld (15)

● It's a fact of nature that the vagina is a moist place. And at certain times of the month, normally during ovulation, it becomes wetter. This is due to hormonal changes linked to your period. And heavy petting is likely to make you produce even more lubrication. But this is normal and it's simply a sign that you're really turned on. Sexperts say these juices are the female equivalent of the male erection.

As for stopping the process, well, there's no need. Sure, you could think about hoovering your room to stop yourself getting turned on, but why not just enjoy the sensation? Furthermore, when you eventually do have sex (remember the age of consent, pur-lease!), you'll find all this moisture makes it far easier and much more enjoyable. So now you know, just relax and enjoy yourself.

What's a hard on?

Every time I kiss my boyfriend, he says he gets a hard on – and that it's because of me. I don't want to sound stupid, but I haven't got a clue what he means by this. Could you please explain? Thanks.

Confused Brookside fan (14)

● The term 'hard on' is slang for an erection – when a guy's penis stiffens and becomes erect. If your loved one's wearing spray-on trews, then you may be able to see a distinct bulge down there. But sometimes you won't notice what's going on at all. Tight trousers or not, your boyfriend's reaction is perfectly normal in this situation.

Most fellas get an erection when they're sexually aroused (and sometimes even when they're not). And yes, as you describe, it's entirely normal for even the merest snog to cause a stiffening in these parts.

Pill plans

My mate says that before you can get the Pill, a doctor asks you questions and checks your insides. Please tell me exactly what happens and, as I'm only 15, will they tell my mum? I'd die if she found out.

J17 fan, Lewes

● In spite of the fact that you're underage (and please think carefully before you have sex), the family planning clinic won't blow the whistle on you.

It's vital for the doctor to ensure you're in good health before prescribing the Pill. After all, we're talking medicine here, not Smarties! So you'll be asked about your medical history and your blood pressure and weight will be recorded. You may have an 'internal' to see if your plumbing's OK, but usually it's done when

you're older. All being well, you'll be prescribed a suitable Pill with no more than six months' supply, as regular check-ups are a must.

The Pill is fab for preventing pregnancy, but won't stop HIV or sexually transmitted diseases, so always use a condom too. For more info, call the Family Planning Association on 0171-636 7866.

The sex Files

The good ol' condom has royal connections. Apparently it was invented back in the 17th century by Dr Condom (I kid you not!), who's said to have been a court physician to King Charles II. According to legend, His Royal Highness had nooky wearing a sheath made out of sheep's intestines scented with perfume. Sexy or what? Bleugh!

Feedback

I was shocked by the letter from the girl who knows so little about AIDS and HIV ('Confidential', 15 Jan). I'm 16 and we have brilliant Sex Ed classes at my school in Durham. We've been told all the facts about AIDS, and I think it's awful that some people don't know the risks. I haven't had sex yet, but when I do I'll make sure my boyfriend wears a condom.

Anne, skateboard fanatic

● Thanks for your sussed letter, Anne. Sadly not all schools have such a rigorous approach to Sex Ed. Gay or straight, all sexually active people risk getting HIV, the virus that leads to AIDS. Certain activities carry a greater danger, such as unprotected vaginal intercourse (ie. no condom). Brook Advisory Clinics, GP's surgeries and family planning clinics all have leaflets about HIV and how to protect yourself. So be informed!

Day by day

HOROSCOPES

by Jon Ryder



Wed
19 Feb

Thu
20 Feb

Fri
21 Feb

Sat
22 Feb

Sun
23 Feb

Mon
24 Feb

Tue
25 Feb

Aries
21 Mar-20 Apr

Taurus
21 Apr-21 May

Gemini
22 May-21 Jun

Cancer
22 Jun-23 Jul

Leo
24 Jul-23 Aug

Virgo
24 Aug-23 Sep

Libra
24 Sep-23 Oct

Scorpio
24 Oct-22 Nov

Sagittarius
23 Nov-22 Dec

Capricorn
23 Dec-20 Jan

Aquarius
21 Jan-18 Feb

Pisces
20 Feb-20 Mar

You meant it to be funny, but it came out so very serious. Now you feel stupid, and wish you'd kept your mouth shut.

What a moral dilemma! If you say no, you'll miss the only chance you'll ever get. But if you say yes, you'll feel terrible. Help!

Don't despair if it all goes wrong this morning, 'cause you're in luck. The planets will fix everything for you by the end of the day.

Arguing about money with your oldsters never works. Why? 'Cause they've got it and you haven't, and that's that.

So much for complacency. You thought you'd never scream at your best mate like that, but today it happens. OK, it's your money and you can spend it how you like. But you might give the wrong impression if you tell everyone about it.

You love him to bits. But if he was just smart enough to see when it's not a good time for certain things, you'd love him more.

You're in for some hard work today, say the planets. Yes, but that usually means there's some money to be made. Bonus!

Everything comes at a price, even for you. But when did anything that was worth having ever come cheap?

If you want to have deep discussions with your mates, then go ahead. But you'll find they're not really on your wavelength today.

How adorably you'd like to take him home and keep him by your side all the time. But you can think of certain people who'd object...

You and he seem so far apart, but you're not really. If you both stopped trying to make everything perfect, maybe it would be.

You want him to know you fancy him. But you don't want him to think you'll cling too tightly. Careful judgement required!

Confiding in a certain person about the prob shows you've already decided not to. Otherwise you'd never dare admit it.

You're getting on so well. Is this a good moment to ask him the big question? No, probably not. It could spoil everything.

A message to him shows he hasn't forgotten about you. Actually, he's been thinking about nothing else - just you.

You both know that if you get together it's for real. You're not playing games. Maybe that's why you're hesitating a little.

If things seem horribly complex, don't forget easier ways are almost certainly available. Just stop and think about it for a minute.

If your mate's having you on, you'll murder her. But if she's right, you owe her one huge favour - and she won't forget either.

Your talent for doing things while nobody suspects what you're really up to comes in handy today. Cloak and daggers ahoi!

The blurb on the back of a book often claims that reading it will change your life. This time it's true! You can't stop turning the pages.

You realise that the answers to yesterday's questions will wait until next week - or next year, even. Think about something else.

The trouble with having a reputation for being unpredictable and rebellious is that you have to be like that all the time. It's tiring!

He says he's gonna fix it so everything's fine between you. He means well, but in fact he's doing exactly the wrong thing.

However distracted you get, remember that loyalty to those you care for matters far more than doing something to impress.

Fast talking's needed to get yourself out of some dodgy situations today. Why did you get yourself into them in the first place?

They say love grows stronger if you're apart. A chance to test the theory will emerge today. You'll wish it hadn't.

Still not sure whether you did the right thing or not - and feelings are running so high between you, it's impossible to tell.

Take care today - someone could force you to reveal more than you're ready to. Which could be mighty embarrassing.

Your normal savvy deserts you, leaving you looking like a right klutz. So don't attempt anything that requires great skill today.

You didn't do it - or so you say. But you have to admit you're the obvious suspect. Prepare to put your case very convincingly.

Looks like you'll have to counter a wave of scepticism today. So don't go making wild claims that you can't back up if challenged.

Someone's trying to tell you something but they're not doing very well. Actually, it's a good sign - it shows their feelings are real.

You and he have a bit of a tiff. It's not the end of the world - in fact, this sort of thing could well bring you closer in the end.

Hmm, the stars aren't making your life any easier today. Express yourself clearly - or you could be completely misunderstood.

You'd kinda hoped to keep this stage of things private. But at the rate things are going at the mo', you'll soon be selling tickets with - the tell you.

Medium-dose mind control is the only way to get your mate to notice you. He's not the romantic sort of the sky for you. Shine on!

If you go out with him, your oldsters will go ballistic, and your friends'll think you've gone mental. But there's no stopping you.

Tense times at home, which is unusual for Cancerians. Both sides feel really strongly about this one, so ask yourself why.

Now you're just about talking to each other again, but the issue that divided you a few days ago continues to do so. Back off for a bit.

Don't be too busy to answer his/her questions. You can come when you're next, entirely up to you. Make it happen.

Things will make more sense the second time round. Go back and ask a few questions. See if you can figure out the real truth.

Tact and charm come effortlessly to you normally, but today you'll have to take great care not to make blunders galore.

Gossip 'bout your new, improved image is travelling fast. Now's not the time to feel uncertain - brazen it out and things'll be fine.

Been there, you say, done that. And so you have. Which can only mean one thing - it's time you grew up a bit and moved on.

Aquarians will always put principles before fashion. If it's unkind to animals or people in any way, you're not having any of it.

At last, a quiet day when you can get on with your life without everyone wanting to check up on you or ask you questions.

Less glowing than yesterday, but there's still plenty of celestial influences around to keep the romance going for a while yet.

No real answers to yesterday's puzzle. The more you think about it, the more confused you get. Stop thinking, then.

You wait for that call, but it doesn't come. You hang around the usual places in case they're there. They're not. What's going on?

Phew. It's been a nightmare few days, but at last the planets are giving you a bit of a breather. What a relief.

You can't believe you did that - it was so unlike you. You have to admit, though, it had an effect. Maybe you should do it again.

You can't decide what to do. First one thing, then another. But why's it so important? It's Sunday, after all - nobody's forcing you.

Your parents are being incredibly negative. Or perhaps they're just trying to make sure you see both sides of the argument.

Long-forgotten feelings come flooding back today. You thought you were over it. Just goes to show how wrong you can be.

You know what you'd like to say, but your thoughts are jumbled up. Write it down first - it'll make things clearer.

Spend a few minutes checking up on how you're doing with your resolutions for '97. Not too well? There's still time to sort it out.

You said you never would, but now it seems you're going to. Don't feel too guilty - after all, other people are involved too.

OK, snap decision time. Your mate's a pain, and always will be. So do you put up with her, or is it time to say goodbye?

No matter what you mates say, the problem between you two is still enough. Anybody who goes along with you must realize that!

Major arguments today. You want him so much, yet when you're together you always seem to fight - it's not fair.

You and he have decided that you're ready for a serious relationship with a capital S. That's that, then - you're an item.

You're touchy today - it only takes one word to set you off. Can't think why. Everything's going fine, so what are you afraid of?

He's keen to see you. You're not so keen to see him. But you think it's kinda cute the way he keeps begging you.

You've decided nothing's going to stop you from getting better acquainted with a certain person. As usual, you get your way.

Long-forgotten feelings come flooding back today. You thought you were over it. Just goes to show how wrong you can be.

The school rumour machine's working overtime again. If only your personal life was as exciting as the grapevine says it is!

You don't mind lending your mate a bit of cash now and then. But the way you're going, you might as well be a bank! It's got to stop.

Yes, it's a great idea. Yes, you'd really love to. But you're in for a bit of a bumpy ride - so don't take anything for granted.

You can think of loads of reasons why you should - and only one why you shouldn't. But somehow it seems to outweigh all the others. You don't have to explain your actions to anyone. If they want to ask questions, let 'em - but you don't have to answer.

Put the last few days behind you. Try to start again as if 'nothing had happened. At this stage it's the only thing you can do.

You're wearing a little smile which says you know something nobody else does. And it's nobody else's business, either. You can't help thinking you're gonna have to pay for it later. Well, it's good that you're taking a responsible view, but all the same...

You're about of being very elusive. What makes you do the more interesting? Why does it always work out this way?

Jobs you'd forgotten all about, but still have to do, get in the way of your social life. Unless, of course, you find a sneaky way round 'em. You keep telling yourself to be sensible about all this, but you can't stop feeling the way you do. Totally happy!

Two options today - the boring and easy one, or the tricky, never-tried-before one. Go on, live a little. Try the unknown for once.

Lucky day, say the stars. You don't have to do anything with it if you don't want to. But if you decide to, it'll sparkle. Guaranteed!

If you were someone else, would life be better? Absolutely not - you'd just have someone else's problems to deal with.

Happy birthday to you! Warm felicitations to ex-wild child Drew Barrymore who's 22 on the 22nd

WIN! WIN! WIN!

Prune packs



It's National Prune Week - top mod

Caprice can't keep her hands off the high-fibre snack. We've 20 sets of a tiny tee, roll of make-up brushes and sample pack of California prunes up for grabs. Fill in the following Xword and send it to: **J17/ California Prunes, Prize Xword 447, 20 Orange Street, London, WC2H 7ED by 28 February 1997.**

Across

- 1 See photocue (7)
- 2 Mea (Faithless) (5)
- 3 Chelsea FC's dreadlocked player-manager (4,6)
- 4 Star sign (3)
- 5 Ventura (3)
- 6 Actress Nielsen, Sly Stallone's ex (8)
- 7 Simply Red's haloed hit? (5)
- 8 Only this number for Peter Andre (3)
- 9 Did Gloria Estefan stretch out for this hit? (5)
- 10 Albert Square's marathon man (5)
- 11 The world's most famous pig? (4)
- 12 He's Toadie's brother in Neighbours (9)
- 13 007 James (4)
- 14 He's EastEnders' Grant Mitchell (4,4)
- 15 She was in Europe - for just a little bit (4,1)
- 16 Those Statusque hit-makers (7)

Down

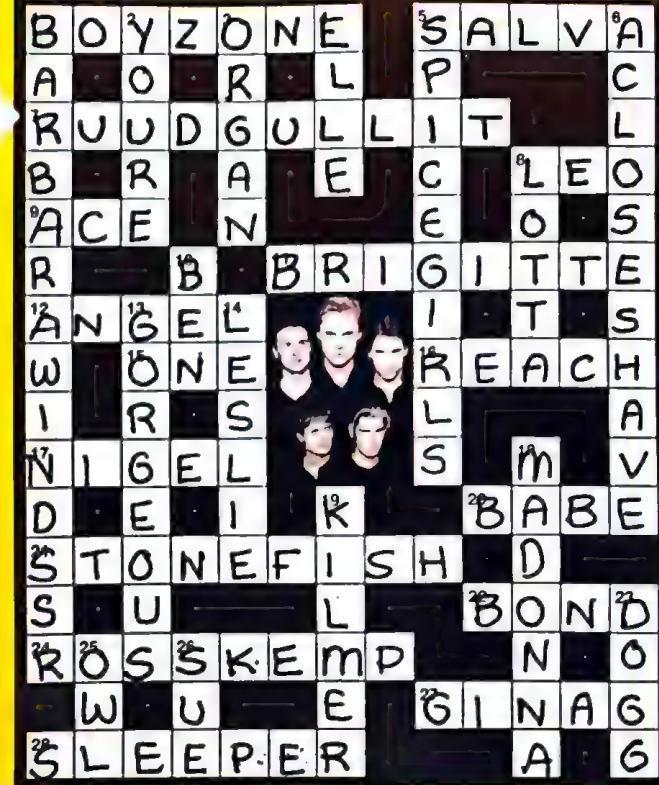
- 1 She carried on into the Queen Vic (7,7)
- 2 13 BabyBird's favourable opinion (5,8)
- 3 Keyboard instrument (5)
- 4 Supermodel MacPherson (4)
- 5 Five who made 2 Become 1 (5,5)
- 6 Wallace and Gromit's sheep-shearing saga (1,5,5)
- 7 Whole — Love (Goldbug) (5)
- 8 Bill's other half in 2point4 Children (3)
- 9 See 2 down
- 10 Men Behaving Badly's Ms Ash (6)
- 11 She's Lourdes' mum (7)
- 12 Movie star Val (6)
- 13 Snoop Doggy — (4)
- 14 Wise bird found amid Robbie Fowler (3)
- 15 Nicholls who's Audrey in Coronation Street (3)

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS: 1 Sue Jenkins; 9 Brittas Empire 11 & 12 down Candida Doyle; 13 (Peter) Andre; 15 Emmy; 16 Child; 17 (Crocodile) Shoes; 20 (Do U) Still; 21 Jared Leto; 23 It's (Oh So Quiet); 25 Who (Are You); 26 Tapes; 27 (Gary) Numur; 28 You're (Gorgeous) **DOWN:** 2 Unbreak My Heart; 3 (Ooh Aah) Just (A Little Bit); 4 & 8 across Now And Then; 5 I Need (You); 6 Stephen (Gately); 7 Fear; 10 Emmerdale; 14 Doin' It'; 15 Sid Owen; 19 (Robson & Jerome; 20 (Killing Me) Softly; 22 (Dani) Behr; 23 Ian (Kelsey); 24 Sam

NAME: MICHELLE LOIZIDES

ADDRESS: 51, DURANTS PARK AVENUE, ENFIELD, MIDDLESEX EN3 7EA XWORD 447



Get to those phones!

Page 5: Win Oasis vids

Phone your answer on 0891 408837

Closing date for competitions 21 February 1997. Please remember that calls to these lines are more expensive than ordinary calls. You should always ask the permission of the person who pays the phone bill before making the call. Calls are charged at 45p per minute cheap rate and 50p per minute at all other times.

Celeb therapy

the stars tell us their problems

Name: Stephen Jones (from BabyBird)

What he's sharing: blushing all the time

Have you always been shy?

"Yes. I think most people are, but they try to hide it by being arrogant. My being shy has always been obvious 'cause it shows in my blood vessels - I just can't help going bright

red. I think shyness can be endearing - but not when it shows so strongly on my face!"

Were you teased at school?

"If I had to get up and read something out in class I'd just go bright red. The other kids would lick their fingers and put them up to my face, like it was sizzling hot or something. I'd feel more irritated than embarrassed. I used to hate going to school."

As you got older, did you grow out of the blushing?

"Not really, I still blush now. For instance, in assembly at school, if the headmaster was trying to find out who'd been nicking things from one of the classrooms I'd blush, even though it wasn't me. I'm still like that now when I'm in a shop. If the

anti-theft system starts buzzing 'cause someone's stolen something, I feel really guilty and start blushing."

Did your blushing get worse when you were around girls?

"No, strangely enough I don't blush around women at all. I can talk to them and that's never been a problem for me. Actually the people who made me blush the most were my family, especially if we were watching TV and something about sex came on."

What's the most embarrassed you've ever been?

"I used to hate the flute, but I was encouraged to play it at school. Anyway we had this music recital and I went very, very red. It didn't help that when you play the flute, you have to breathe in a different way and I ended up collapsing

onto my music stand and fainting on the floor."

So how the jiggins do you manage to get on-stage and sing now?

"That's the weirdest thing 'cause I find it easy to do gigs in front of lots of people. It's the strangeness of shyness - I can do that, but if I was in a room now with just two other people, I couldn't get up and sing."

What advice would you give to other people who have a major blushing problem like yours?

"Just count to ten and decide that you're going to ignore it. I always think people are looking at me and noticing that I'm blushing, but you have to get it into your head that people aren't watching you. A lot of the time you might feel your face getting hot, but no-one else even notices it."



turn on tune in turn on

tv

Don't miss this

The Brit Awards 1997

The time: 8pm, Mon 24 Feb

The place: ITV

The buzz: Last year Jarvis took on Michael Jackson. Who knows what'll happen this year? But we reckon it's gonna be a Spicey affair.

Here's Johnny

The time: 10.30pm, Fri 21 Feb

The place: C4

The buzz: Moviewatch's Johnny

Vaughan hosts his very own chat show. Apparently we can look forward to bits like Licensed to Lurk, Unsung Heroes and Search for a Song. Sounds er, interesting.



Snap

The time:

4.20pm, Mon 24 Feb

The place:

ITV

The buzz:

Former EastEnder Ian Reddington (better known as Tricky Dicky) stars in this six-part drama about life in a photographic studio.



by Adele

Adele Silva's Emmerdale

A character Kelly is having a rather saucy fling with Tom the teacher. We found talking to her quite an education... Would you get involved with a real teacher?

"No way. I say steer clear of teachers, vicars and doctors."

Where d'you go to school?

"Sylvia Young Drama School"

"I've done my English GCSE already. I got an A for the oral." Is a Yorkshire accent hard to do?

"It's OK, but I only like doing it at work. Most Yorkshire folk can't understand my own London accent though!" Cor blimey guv, who'd've fort it!



Soap Central

Switch onto our weekly round-up

Home And Away

Poor old Sebastian discovers he has a serious illness and leaves for Europe in search of a cure. Meanwhile, Travis finds his nuisance caller and a drunken Irish poet called Gabe appears on the scene, much to Shannon's fascination. Hmm, could there be romance on the horizon?

Coronation Street

Tony Horrocks is dead chuffed with his new car, but you know what they say about pride coming before a fall. Des's girlfriend Claire gets a radical new hairstyle. Fiona sees a side to Alan she doesn't like – seems he's more bothered about his job than his mates, silly boy.

Emmerdale

Tom the teacher's been offered a job in Wales, so Kelly tells her mum she wants to move there to be with him. Dee is interrogated by the good ladies of Emmerdale, who are shocked to find her wedding wasn't your average fairytale romance. And we thought Eric had gone all soppy on us.

Neighbours

Steve George is very much the smitten kitten when he meets Danni, but is the feeling mutual? A bout of flu miraculously improves Phil's writing skills, while Darren finds himself prime suspect as an explosion rocks Lassiter's and the surgery goes up in flames.

Brookside

Tension mounts between Mick and Elaine and Lindsey takes action to erase Mike from her life. Poor old Leo can't get the hang of his motorbike and falls off it. Ouch!

Hollyoaks

Mrs Benson gets a blast from the past and gives Kurt an idea for a birthday present. Max and Darren skive off school and Ollie gets caught with Mandy. Jambo winds himself up about his mum's affair and Lewis makes trouble for Baz. What's he playing at?

EastEnders

Peggy's planning a party for George's 50th – will it be as rip-roaring as Christmas lunch at the Vic? Sarah decides to show Joe the ways of the Lord. As Sanjay's away, Tony's minding Mark's pitch and Simon is adding his own special touches to the clothes stall. Bless!

film

Grace Of My Heart (12)

The deal: Denise (Mélanie Douglas)

is a small-town girl who moves to New York to create some of the best pop songs of the sixties. Along the way she



falls for beach-boy music Matt Dillon and ends up being best pals with fellow songwriter Patty Jenkins. Useless guest appearance: ex-The Word presenter and Keanu's maybe-fiancee, Amanda de Cadenet. Go see? A must for all wannabe Spice Girls

 **On screen:** 21 Feb

Anita

Awright Johnny?

Turns up to super-spunk Johnny Depp. What does he like most about Kate Moss? Her San London twang, that's what

"Man, you just can't beat that accent," says the lovelorn lad. We reckon your voice is pretty cute too, Johnny Boy!



video

The Cable Guy (12)

Jim Carrey's a deranged TV repair man desperate for a chum. Unsuspecting Matthew Broderick hires him and is faced with Carrey's weird behaviour. Sadly, Jim can't shake off his old character's mannerisms, making this flick very predictable and weak

For real Carrey fans only

 **To rent:** 19 Feb



tune in turn on tune in tu music

Clock in

Top dancemeisters Clock release *It's Over* next week. We took some time out with singin', dancin' vixen Tinka... Tinka's not your real name is it?

"No, I'm called Lorna really. Tinka's short for my nickname Tinkerbell - 'cause I always used to get into trouble."

You're named after a timepiece, so what time of day do you like best?

"Any time when I'm asleep. It's the only time I get any peace and quiet."

What time do you get up?

"If I'm not working I usually stay up late with my flatmate. We watch videos and do really girly things like painting our nails, so I don't even think



about getting up until 11 the next morning!"

No-one knew what Clock looked like - why d'you decide to be on the cover of your new record?

"We used to be pretty underground and faceless. But since our chart success we reckon it's time people got to see what we look like."

What about the single?

"It's the kind of track that cheers you up. It'd be ideal to play if you were sitting in your bedroom after you'd split up with your boyfriend."

Album of the week

911

The Journey

911 are the only bunch who seem capable of challenging Boyzone for the title of chief boyband, and this collection'll give 'em more firepower. From *Don't Make Me Wait* to *The Journey* (Lee's song about battling cancer) this'll take you on an emotional rollercoaster.



Album of the week 2

Mansun

Attack of the Grey Lantern

Mansun have been quietly getting huge over the last year. If you missed out on singles like *Stripper Vicar* and *Wide Open Space*, this is your chance to get down wiv 'em. As well as being one of the cuter indie bands, Mansun also write some of the catchiest choons. Bonus!

Spin It or Bin It



way cool



wa-hay



what ever



wussy

The Source Featuring

Candi Staton

You Got The Love

A big smasherooni years ago (ask your older sis'), it's now back re-mixed, re-jigged and remarkable.

Get your dancing hat on - it's disco time.

Mantaray

Know Where To Find You



If you like The Charlatans you might well go a bundle on this, but it's not interesting enough to



make your hair stand on end. Indie for wimps.

Cake

The Distance

Crumbs! Cake stir up a mix of hip-hop beats, rock guitars and rap, all iced with sweet harmonies. Deffo



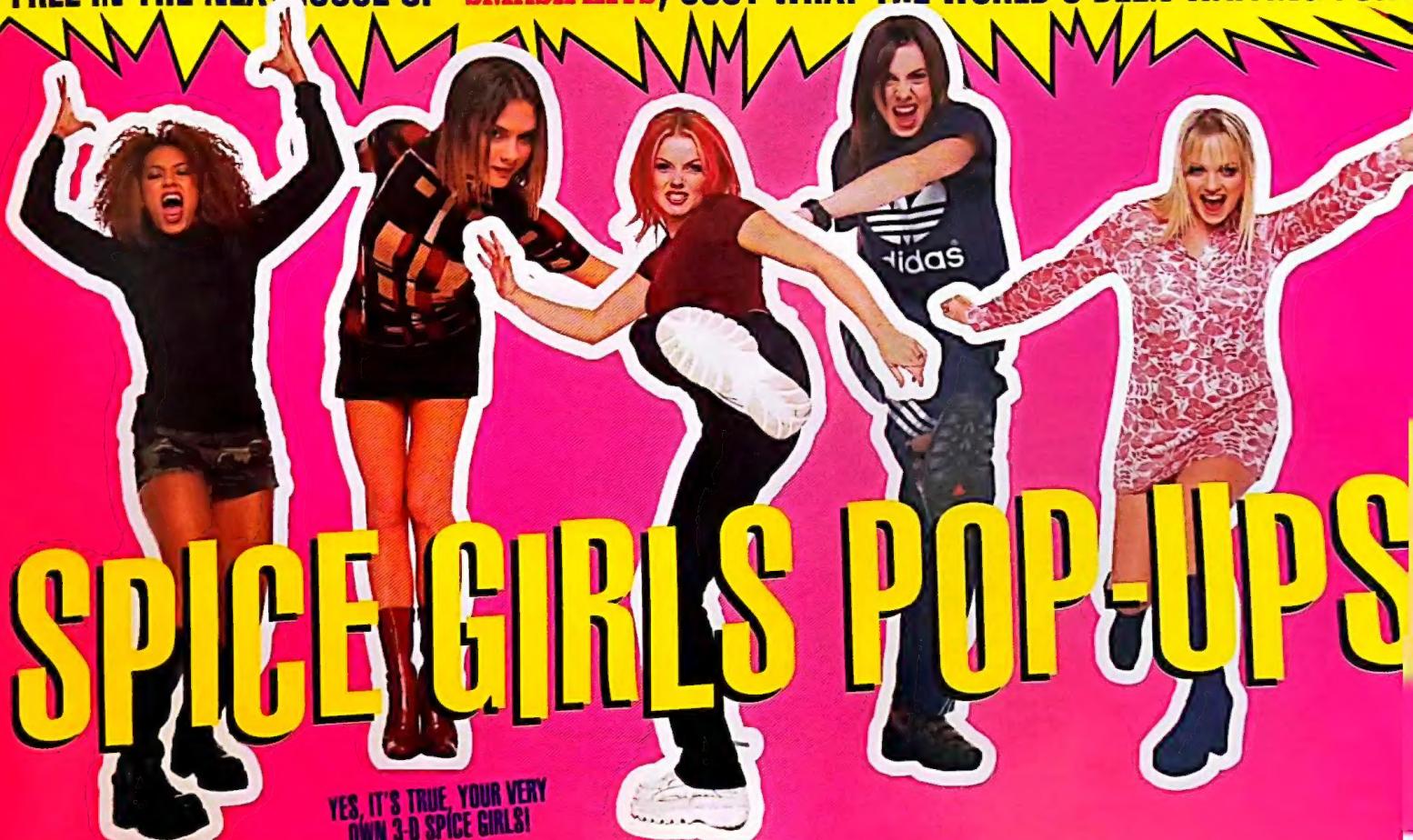
a cherry on top of this one. Flantastic!

General Levy

Unique

Jungle? Mr Levy is here to oblige. This is the real deal, mind. Yer mum'd say it's just some bloke shouting over a din. She might well be right.

FREE IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF **SMASH HITS**, JUST WHAT THE WORLD'S BEEN WAITING FOR.



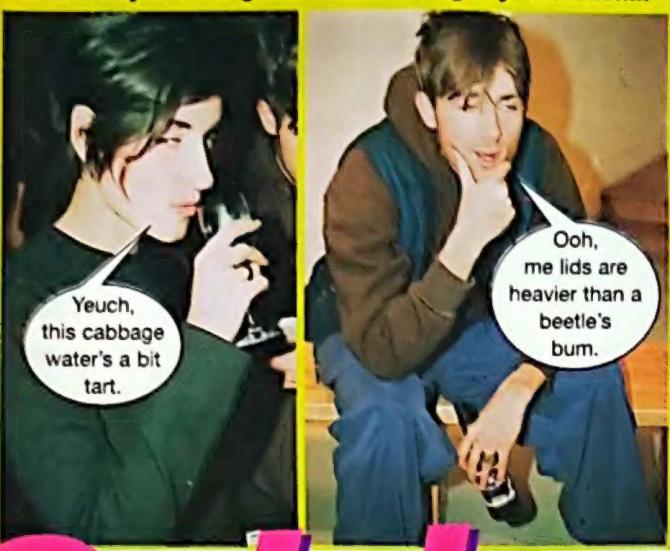
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7 days of groovers 'n' schmoozers

Damon and Justine Elastica really are made for each other. They've even got the same strange eye affliction...



The Fries on the bus go round round round



Ginger prince of patchwork Chris Evans plays charades with bearded Virgin bloke Richard Branson



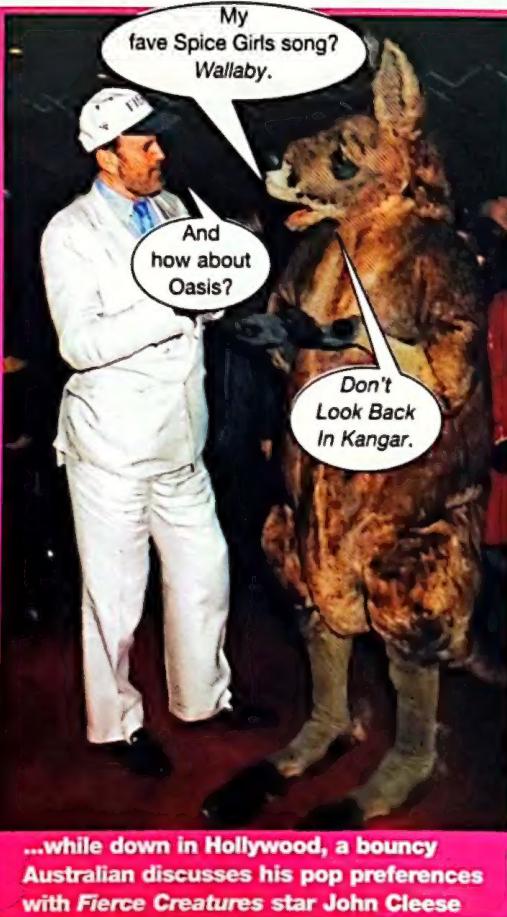
Quick flash!

There ain't nobody who's more down wit dem celebs than our Mikey...

On a cross-Canada flight, Posh Victoria and Ginger Gezza are running low on girl power...

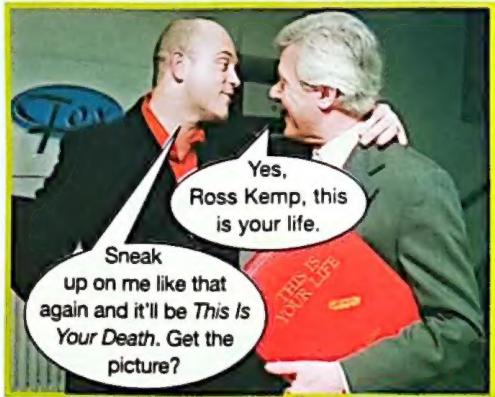


...Baby Emma seems to be counting sheep...



...while down in Hollywood, a bouncy Australian discusses his pop preferences with *Fierce Creatures* star John Cleese

Michael Aspel takes his life in his hands with TV toughster Grunt Mitchell



Prime Suspect's Helen Mirren gets peckish at the Golden Globe Awards...



...and *Secrets And Lies* star Brenda Blethyn gives Nicholas Cage the willies



Zig-a-zag star: Michael Photo: PA/Capital

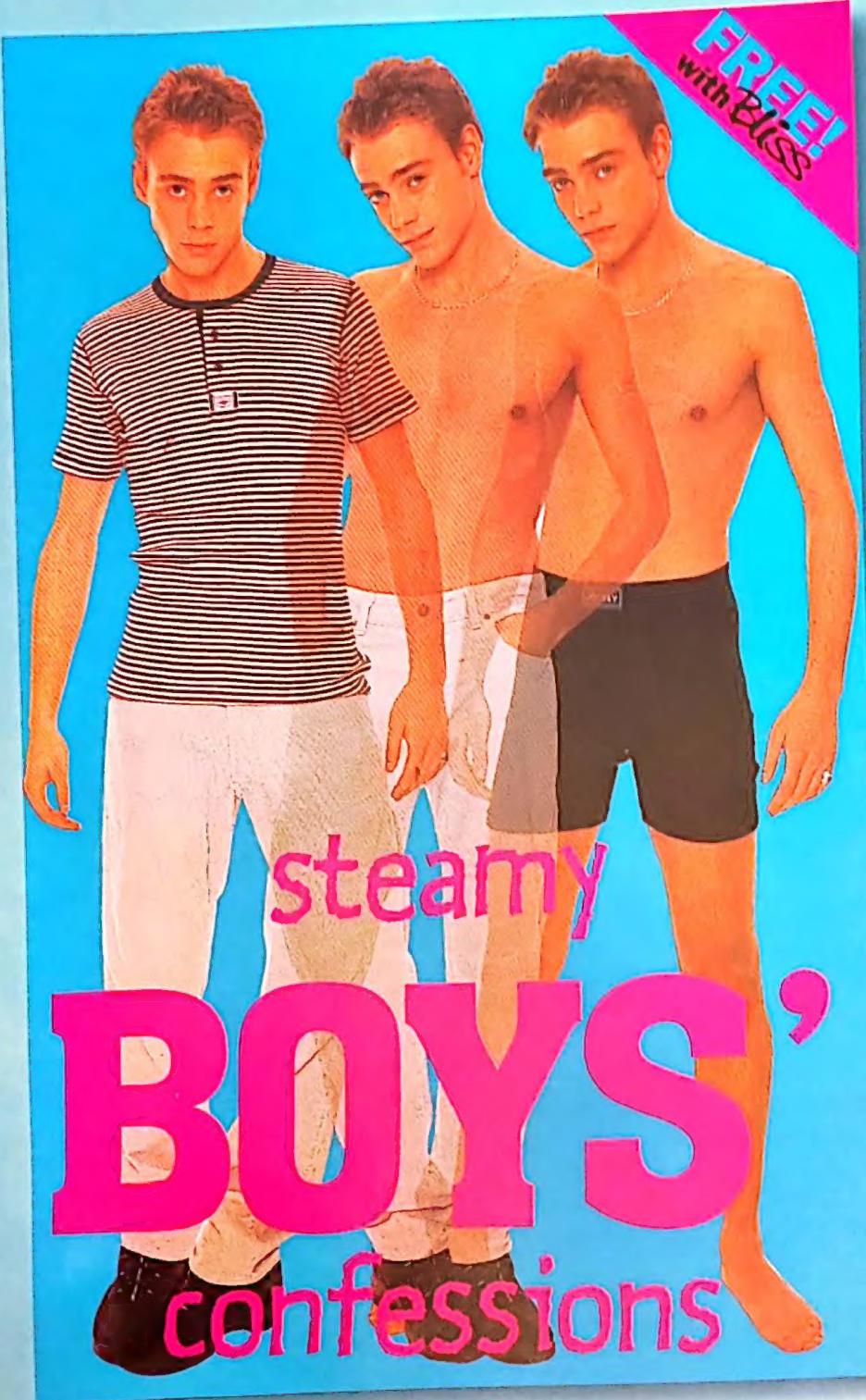
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- Bad boys –
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from lads with
attitude



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Ol ol ayeoy... er, dear newsey

I'll be over the moon if you'll reserve/deliver a copy of premier mag J17 this Wednesday and every other. It's the only mid-week fixture for me.

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